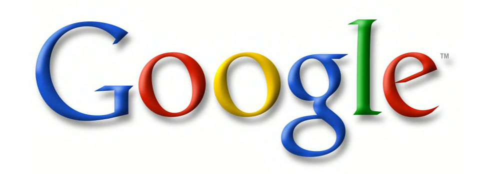
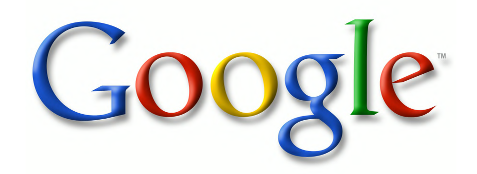
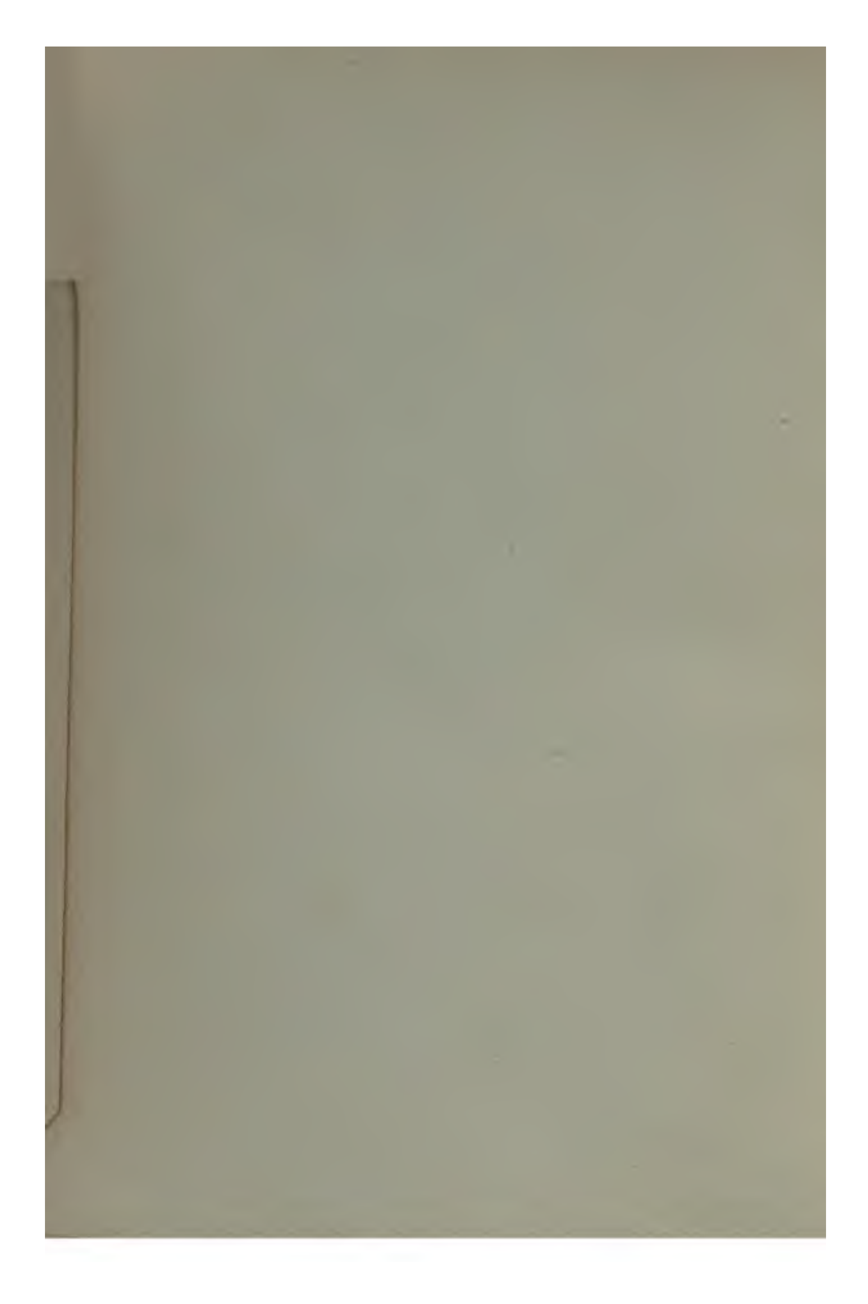
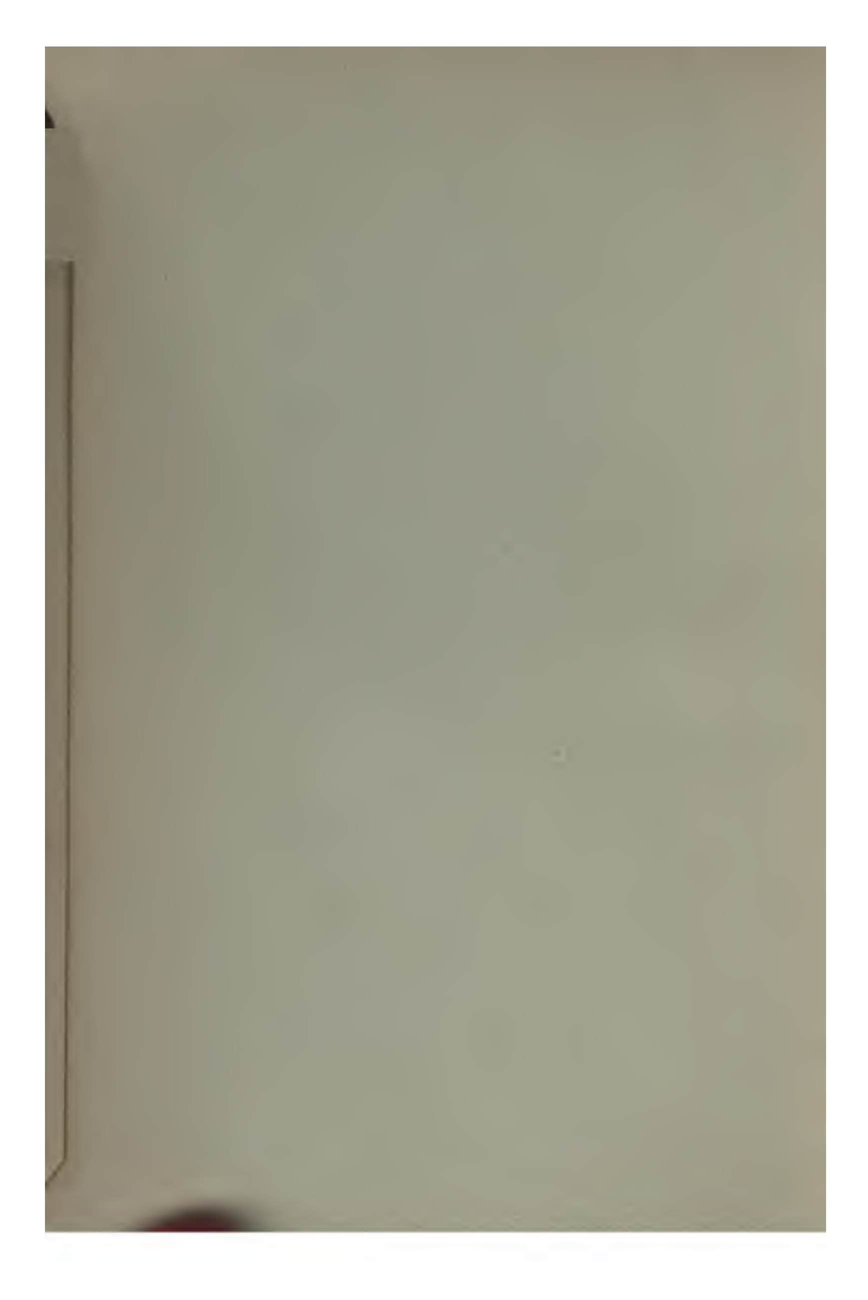






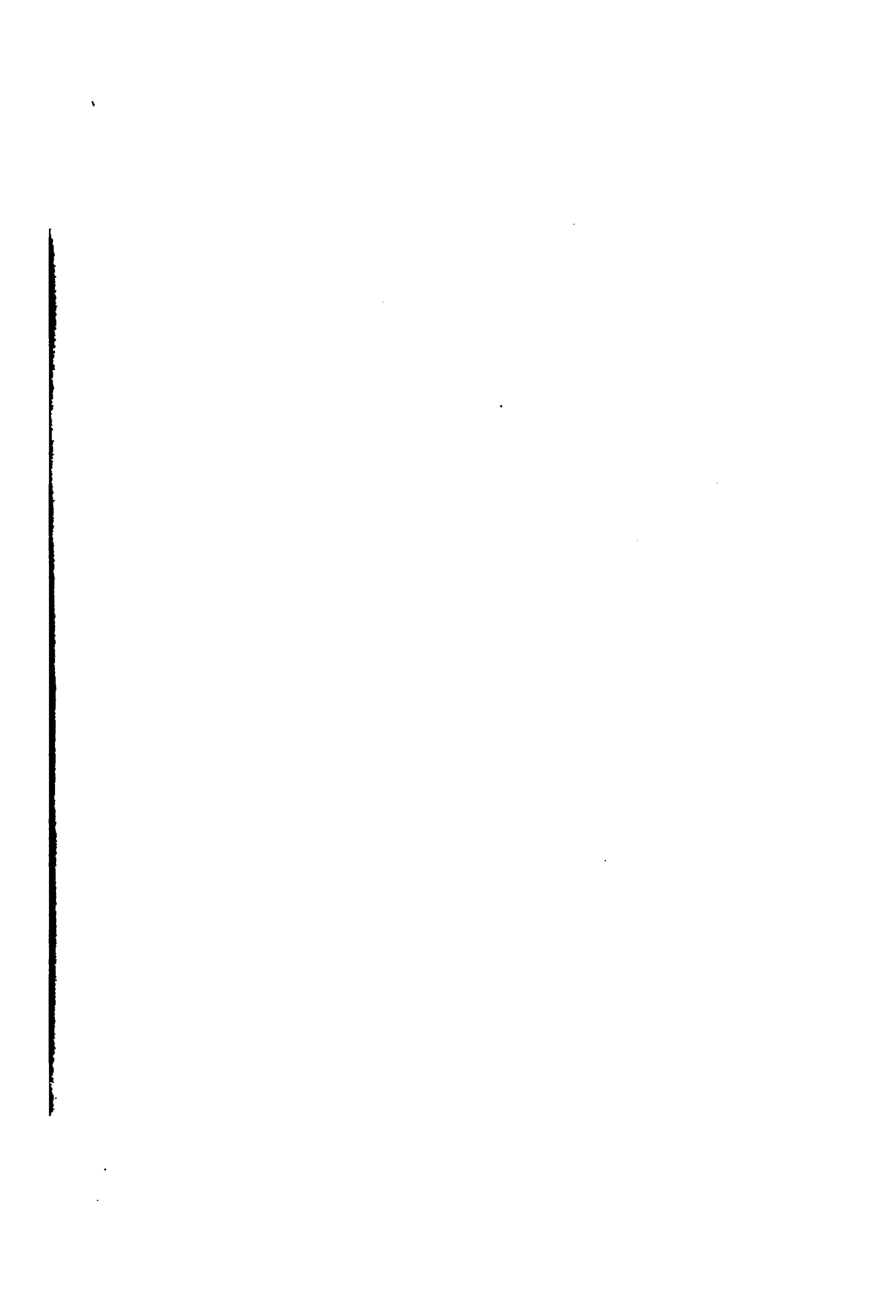












Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 1749-183

Goethes

Iphigenie auf Tauris

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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TO THE MEMORY OF

My Mother



PREFACE.

This edition of Goethe's *Iphigenie* has been prepared largely with reference to the needs of college students who have become sufficiently familiar with the principles of the German language to read this drama from the literary point of view, as one of the great masterpieces of Goethe's genius. The text is based upon the Weimar edition of *Iphigenie*, Vol. X. The deviations from this standard edition are chiefly those of orthography, in which the Prussian system of spelling has been adopted. The punctuation has also, to some extent, been modernized according to present requirements.

The rather extended introduction and copious notes require some explanation. The teacher undertaking to read *Iphigenie* to-day with average college students is confronted with peculiar problems. The intelligent reading of the drama presupposes a reasonable acquaintance with the mythological and legendary world of ancient Greece, and yet, owing to the marked decline of classical studies in recent years in high schools and colleges, the average student has but the vaguest and most meager knowledge of the subject. Several years of experience in teaching the drama have convinced the editor that only very little of such information can be assumed. He has therefore deemed it wise to treat this mythological and legendary material more fully than would have been

necessary a generation ago, when the ancient classics were the central studies in most of our high schools and colleges.

The difficulties become immeasurably greater if a comparative study of the drama is attempted. It will be generally admitted that such a study is very suggestive and helpful for the thorough understanding of the characteristically modern elements of Goethe's work. Unfortunately, however, only few of our students have the requisite knowledge of the ancient Greek dramas upon which such a study must be based. To the average modern student Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are mere names, conveying little or no meaning. To obviate to some extent this serious difficulty, the editor has sketched the eight Greek dramas from which Goethe drew so much of his material, and has tried to suggest how the leading ideas of each of these dramas differ from the central thought of Goethe's *Iphigenie*. The purpose in these short accounts has been simply to elucidate the German drama; all other considerations, however interesting in themselves, have been omitted.

The Greek sources in Goethe's drama are so extensive that economy of space has made it impossible to treat them all fully in the notes. The editor has therefore in general adopted the following plan: Wherever the dependence of the poet upon his Greek source seemed very close, affecting even his style, the Greek text has been cited together with the English translation; wherever the dependence seemed more general, influencing merely the thought or sentiment, only the English translation has been given; whereas cases in which the influence seemed more distant have been merely referred to. A number of sources suggested by various critics have been omitted, because they seemed very doubtful. The editor

is, however, fully aware that his division and selection cannot be dogmatically urged, and that in some instances there is good ground for differences of opinion. In the translations from the Greek the editor has, with few exceptions, adopted Paley for Æschylus, Jebb for Sophocles, and Arthur S. Way for Euripides.*

The editor has also deemed it advisable to lay some stress upon the French and German sources of Goethe's drama. The fruitful investigations of Morsch, Seuffert, and Minor have here been largely followed, but economy of space has again obliged the editor to select only such passages as seemed to him strikingly similar in thought and expression to portions of Goethe's drama.

In the explanation of grammatical questions and in the translation of difficult passages the editor has been guided largely by his experience with students who have had about two and a half or three years of college German. A reasonable knowledge of the life and times of Goethe, such as may be obtained from one of the smaller biographies, has been assumed. The main stress of the introduction and notes has been laid upon literary interpretation. Goethe's *Iphigenie* is essentially a Seelendrama, and therefore the editor has especially emphasized the psychological processes in the various characters, and has endeavored to show their relation to the leading ideas and the main action of the drama. Accordingly, the central part of the introduction has been devoted to the discussion of the healing of Orestes, which, as forming 'the axis of the play', has of late years engaged the chief attention of the students of the drama. The editor has here taken the position that the *Iphigenie*, like the

* The Tragedies of Euripides in English Verse. By Arthur S. Way. 3 vols. London, 1896.

other representative works of Goethe, must be studied from the standpoint of the poet's experience, and that therefore a careful analysis of this experience and the poet's own correspondence, which provides very full information on almost every phase of the work, are the safest guides for the sound interpretation of the drama.

The various school editions mentioned in the bibliography have been more or less carefully consulted, and the editor wishes to acknowledge here his indebtedness to them, especially, however, to the editions of Breul, Eggert, Rhoades, Vockeradt, and Waetzoldt, and to the commentaries, essays, and investigations of Bielschowsky, Düntzer, Evers, Frick, Grimm, Kanzow, Morsch, Schröer, Thalmayr, and Thümen.

The editor also wishes to express his thanks to Professors Alexander Ziwet and Tobias Diekhoff of the University of Michigan for their careful reading of the manuscript and their helpful suggestions.

MAX WINKLER.

ANN ARBOR, MICH., June, 1905.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE LEGEND OF ORESTES.

THE legend of Orestes is intimately connected with the story of the siege of Troy. When Paris of Troy awarded the prize of beauty to Aphrodite, that goddess promised to reward him with the love of Helen, the most celebrated beauty of antiquity. The abduction of Helen caused then the great war in which the Greek heroes avenged the wrong by the destruction of Troy. But this victory was dearly bought, for many Greek heroes died before the walls of Troy, others returned to their native land only after long wanderings and serious hardships, while Agamemnon, the commander-in-chief of the Greek forces, was treacherously murdered upon his return to Mycenæ by his wife Clytæmnestra and her paramour Ægisthus.

The murder of Agamemnon is but one of a long series of unnatural crimes which the ancients traced back to the curse pronounced by the Olympians upon Tantalus, the founder of the race. Tantalus is the mythical type of the class of men who, blinded by their extraordinary good fortune, fall into arrogance and sin. He was the son of Zeus and the Titaness Pluto (rich plenty), a daughter of Cronus, and was a rich king of Lydia, according to others, of Phrygia. The gods themselves honored him with their friendship, he was invited to eat at their table,

shared with them nectar and ambrosia, and was entrusted with their secrets. This good fortune aroused in him such presumption that he committed the most impious crimes against gods and men. Tradition relates that he stole nectar and ambrosia from the gods and gave them to men, and that he cut his own son Pelops to pieces, boiled them, and presented them to the gods at a feast to test their omniscience. Finally the gods brought down upon him the heaviest retribution. Tradition is silent about the manner in which he lost his kingdom and his life, but his punishment in the lower world is frequently described. According to one story the most tempting fruits were suspended above his head, but whenever he tried to snatch them, winds blew them beyond his reach. He stood up to his neck in water, and yet was parched with thirst, for when he bowed his head eager to quench his thirst, the water suddenly receded. Another tradition relates that he was kept in constant terror by a huge rock which was suspended over his head.

The crimes of Tantalus were visited upon his descendants. He had two children, Niobe and Pelops. Niobe married Amphion, king of Thebes, and had many lovely children, but she showed the same presumption which had led her father to trifle with the gods. Proud of her numerous progeny, she provoked the anger of Apollo and Artemis by boasting over their mother Leto, who had but these two children. She was punished by seeing all her children laid low in one day by the unerring arrows of Apollo and his sister. Paralyzed with grief, she was turned by the gods into stone.—Pelops, the son of Tantalus, restored to life by the art of Hermes, became a suitor for the hand of Hippodamia, daughter of Œnomäus, king of Elis. The latter had promised to give his daughter in marriage to any man who could vanquish him in a chariot

race, but declared that whoever was unsuccessful would have to pay for his temerity with his life. Pelops induced the king's charioteer, Myrtilus, to withdraw the linch-pins of his master's chariot and replace them with wax. He thus came off victorious in the race and won Hippodamia. Then, to release himself of the promises of reward made to Myrtilus, he cast him into the sea. Myrtilus, as he sank, cursed Pelops and his whole race.*

Pelops had two sons by Hippodamia, Atreus and Thyestes, whose history is full of the most revolting crimes.† They first murdered their half-brother Chrysippus and were in consequence obliged to leave their country, Elis. They were hospitably received in Mycenæ by their brother-in-law Sthenelus, the son of Perseus, and eventually succeeded to the sovereignty of the Persidæ in Argos. But implacable enmity soon arose between the brothers; Thyestes dishonored his brother's wife and was banished from Mycenæ. Upon leaving he took with him Plisthenes, the young son of Atreus, brought him up as his own son, and sent him later to Mycenæ to kill Atreus. The plot was discovered and Plisthenes was killed. When Atreus learned that he had condemned his own son to death, he planned a terrible revenge. Feigning reconciliation, he invited Thyestes and his two sons to Mycenæ, seized the latter, slew them, and set this horrible food before their father. Thyestes, upon discovering this crime, uttered fearful curses upon his brother and fled from Mycenæ, resolved upon revenge. With the help of his remaining son Ægisthus he suc-

* According to the *Electra* of Sophocles (ll. 504–516) it was this curse of the drowning Myrtilus which rested upon the descendants of Pelops.

† These crimes seem to have been later inventions of the tragic *poets; there* is no mention of them in Homer.

ceeded in slaying Atreus and becoming the ruler of Mycenæ. The sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, fled to Sparta, where the former married Clytæmnestra and the latter Helen, both daughters of king Tyndareus. With the aid of Tyndareus Agamemnon slew Thyestes, drove Ægisthus out of Mycenæ and recovered his father's kingdom. Menelaus remained in Sparta, and became its ruler after the death of his father-in-law Tyndareus.

When the Trojan war broke out Agamemnon was chosen leader of the expedition. The ships of the Greeks assembled in the Bœotian port Aulis, but Artemis, who had been once offended by Agamemnon, delayed the departure of the fleet by contrary winds. The nature of his offense is variously given. According to one tradition he had shot a favorite stag of the goddess and uttered a boast concerning its slaughter.* Another tradition relates that Agamemnon had once vowed to sacrifice to the goddess the most beautiful thing that the year might bring forth. That most beautiful object was his daughter Iphigenia, who was born that year and whom he failed to sacrifice.† To appease Artemis and secure favorable winds for the fleet, the seer Calchas commanded Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia. Agamemnon had to yield, but at the critical moment Iphigenia was rescued by the goddess herself, who substituted a hind in her stead. Artemis then conveyed her to Tauris and made her there priestess of her temple. The Greeks, however, believed that she had been sacrificed.

While Agamemnon was fighting before the walls of Troy,

* Cf. the *Electra* of Sophocles, ll. 566 ff.

† *Cf. Iphigenia among the Taurians* of Euripides, ll. 16 ff.

Ægisthus, the son of Thyestes, returned to Mycenæ and made Clytæmnestra his paramour. After the fall of Troy Agamemnon returned to his kingdom, but immediately upon his arrival was murdered by his wife and Ægisthus. Various motives are ascribed by the poets for Clytæmnestra's conduct. She wished above all to avenge herself upon her husband because he had yielded to the command of Calchas and had allowed her favorite daughter Iphigenia to be sacrificed at Aulis. Moreover, she was jealous of Cassandra, daughter of Priam, whom at the fall of Troy Agamemnon had received as his prize and brought to Mycenæ.

Agamemnon's murder could not go unavenged. Orestes, the only son of Agamemnon and Clytæmnestra, had, at the time of the murder, been hastily despatched from Mycenæ and sent to his uncle Strophius, king of Phocis.* Strophius had Orestes educated with his own son Pylades, who was of about the same age. A friendship soon sprang up between them which was celebrated in antiquity for its extraordinary devotion and constancy. Upon arriving at man's estate Orestes' whole thought was directed to avenging his father's treacherous murder, for the unwritten law of revenge and the express command of the oracle of Apollo required of him retribution upon the murderers. Accompanied by his friend Pylades he arrived in the eighth year of his exile in Mycenæ, and slew there his mother and Ægisthus. But in so doing he incurred the gravest guilt by murdering her who had

* According to Pindar (*Pythian Odes*, 11, 15) the boy was rescued by his nurse; according to Æschylus (*Ag.* 853 ff.) Clytæmnestra sent him away to Strophius before his father's return from Troy; while in the *Electras* of Sophocles and Euripides the boy was saved with the aid of Electra by a trusty servant.

given him birth. Therefore, soon after the murder, he found himself pursued by the Erinyes or Furies, the dread avengers of every violation of the moral laws of the world, whether incurred by gods or men. They dogged his steps and pursued him through all the countries of the earth, so that he was obliged to seek refuge in the temple of Apollo in Delphi. The oracle of that place bade him go to Athens and present himself there for trial before the court of the Areopagus, which was instituted for this trial by Pallas Athena. Athena herself was the presiding judge, and Apollo pleaded in defense of Orestes. The votes for and against Orestes were equal, whereupon Athena gave her casting vote for the defendant, and he was adjudged acquitted.

Another version relates that only a part of the Furies accepted this verdict. The dissenting ones continued to pursue Orestes, so that he was again obliged to appeal for help to the oracle at Delphi. This time the oracle commanded him to go to Tauris, seize there an ancient image of Artemis, which was said to have fallen from the sky, and convey it to Attica. Apollo promised him complete release from the Furies when this deed was accomplished. Orestes and Pylades sailed to Tauris, but upon arriving there were captured by the inhabitants and delivered over to the priestess, who, according to the barbaric custom of the land, was to sacrifice them at the altar of the goddess. At the critical moment, however, they discovered that the priestess of the temple was Iphigenia, the sister of Orestes, who was believed to have been sacrificed in Aulis. Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades then planned to carry off the sacred image and escape to Greece. Through the intervention of Athena they succeeded, and Orestes was henceforth released from the pursuit of the Furies.

BLOOD-GUILT AMONG THE GREEKS.*

To appreciate the causes of the inner conflicts and sufferings of Orestes we must understand the attitude of the ancient Greeks toward murder. In primitive times we find the generally accepted belief that the soul survived after death, and had the power to influence the fortunes of the living. If a man was murdered, his spirit demanded that his death be avenged by his nearest surviving kinsmen, and if they neglected to do so, the spirit could work as a perpetual curse in their lives. This belief that the ghost of the murdered person demanded vengeance is the basis of the Greek ideas regarding the punishment of murder. But in primitive times murder was not regarded as a crime against gods and men, but rather as an injury against the murdered person which had to be avenged by his surviving relatives. It was their duty to exact blood for blood under penalty of terrible persecution by the ghost of the murdered man. If, however, the murderer fled to a foreign land, the ghost of the victim, no longer enraged by the sight of the murderer, was supposed to be appeased, for the influence of the ghost did not extend beyond the confines of the country in which he had lived. The murderer in the foreign land was not regarded as tainted and could associate on terms of equality with his fellow men, so long as he lived out of the sphere of activity of the dead man's spirit.

In Homeric times the old custom of blood-vengeance relaxed. We hear that it was then possible for the murderer to compound for the life of his victim by paying a fine to the kinsfolk or by going into exile. But the

* Cf. here Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's Introduction to his edition of the *Choëphoræ* of Æschylus (*Blutrache und Muttermord*), pp. 3–30. Berlin, 1896.

custom of the blood-feud was so deeply rooted in the popular consciousness that it was revived and intensified in historical times. The causes of this revival are obscure. Suffice it to say that some time after Homer the murderer was regarded as polluted, he was under a curse and brought curse upon all with whom he came in contact. The wrath of the dead could no longer be appeased by the flight of the murderer into a foreign land. The spirit pursued him everywhere, over land and sea, and the Erinyes aided in this endless pursuit. The primitive belief that the living must avenge the dead received a more solemn sanction, there was no expiation for bloodshed, no possibility of relief for the accursed murderer. A terrible dilemma arose. If the surviving kinsman obeyed the law and avenged the dead, he in turn became a murderer and was at the mercy of the kindred of his victim; if he neglected his duty, he was liable to the same penalties as the murderer himself. And so a murder once committed brought in its train an endless chain of crime and suffering or, as Æschylus says in his *Agamemnon* (ll. 758 ff.): 'it is the impious deed that gives birth to more such deeds after it, and like to its own race'.

Here the cult of Apollo, whose worship was centered in Delphi and whose spiritual influence had in time become the greatest in Greece, came to the assistance of the troubled Greek conscience. Whatever Apollo may have been in earlier times, we find that from the eighth century on he stands forth from among the other divinities as the god of light and of purity, to whom every stain of blood is abhorrent. Naturally the great moral questions and perplexities with respect to murder were submitted to this Delphic god. He undertook to mediate between man and the terrible forces of revenge to which he was exposed. He was the just god who could estimate the various

degrees of guilt and in some cases exercise clemency. Although he continued to enforce the old duty of vengeance and even quickened the moral sense of the avenger, he offered under certain circumstances the possibility of escape from permanent pollution by some elaborate ritual of purification and various acts of atonement.

The Delphic religion with its ritual of purification from murder naturally affected the story of Orestes, for the unnatural crime of Orestes afforded the Delphic priesthood the most impressive text for expounding the teachings of the god. According to the general belief of the Greeks Orestes did right in murdering his mother, but by so doing he called forth the activity of the Erinyes against him. Who then was to protect him and assert even against the dread goddesses that his act was just? None else than the Delphic god, the supreme arbiter of justice and purity. And so we find that in the development of the legend and in its treatment by the tragic poets it is Apollo who directs the actions of Orestes, and finally releases him from the pursuit of the Erinyes and purifies him from the stain of murder.

THE LEGEND OF ORESTES AND IPHIGENIA IN ANCIENT LITERATURE.

The legend of Orestes as outlined above is constructed from various still extant accounts of Greek poets. The development of the legend in literature shows a distinct effort on the part of the poets to deepen the moral motives of the principal characters and give a fuller expression and finer organization to every phase of the story. In the following sketch of the treatment which the legend received in Greek poetry we shall dwell especially upon

those works which in some way distinctly influenced Goethe's drama.

Homer knows as yet nothing of the story of Iphigenia's experience in Aulis, and of the matricide and remorse of Orestes, the two branches of the legend which were united by Euripides. In fact, the name of Iphigenia does not yet occur in Homer. In the *Iliad* IX, ll. 142 ff., Agamemnon tells Nestor that he has three daughters, Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa, any one of whom he is willing to give to Achilles in marriage. The story of Agamemnon's murder appears first in the *Odyssey*. Here it is related that Ægisthus, the paramour of Clytæmnestra, slew Agamemnon on his return from Troy,* that Orestes fled or was despatched to Athens, that after the murder Ægisthus and Clytæmnestra reigned seven years in Mycenæ, but that in the eighth Orestes returned and slew Ægisthus. Clytæmnestra died at the same time, but we are not told how.† It is possible to assume that she died by her own hand. In the Homeric account there is nowhere a divine command of Apollo that Orestes should take vengeance. The deed of Orestes is regarded as a natural and laudable revenge. There is no mention of a persecution by the Furies.

In the *Cyprian Lays*, an epic of the Trojan cycle assigned by some to Stasînus (eighth century B.C.), we hear of Iphigenia as one of the daughters of Agamemnon, of her sacrifice in Aulis and her removal by the goddess to Tauris. Stêsichorus of Himera (632–552 B.C.) wrote a long and very celebrated poem on the story of Orestes, the *Oresteia*. Only very few fragments of it have come down to us, but an effort has been made to reconstruct

* Cf. *Odyssey* I, ll. 29 ff.; I, ll. 298 ff.; III, ll. 193 ff.; IV, ll. 514–535; XI, ll, 404–434.

† *Ibid.* III, ll. 303 ff.

its general outline with the help of archæology.* From these investigations it appears that in this poem Clytæmnestra slew her husband, that Orestes was saved by his nurse, and after some years returned and killed Ægisthus and his mother. After the murder the Erinyes persecuted him, and Apollo furnished him with a divine bow and arrows as a protection against them. The drama of Æschylus probably followed the general outlines of the story of the *Oresteia.*—The sacrifice of Iphigenia is also referred to by Pindar (522–448 B.C.), who in his eleventh Pythian ode (478 B.C.) suggests that the motives of Clytæmnestra's crime may have been her desire of revenge for the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aulis. These brief notices will suffice to show that the Orestes legend had been considerably developed and ethically deepened during the period between Homer and Æschylus.

A legend so rich in dramatic possibilities naturally appealed to the Greek dramatists and became one of their most popular themes. The three greatest tragic poets of Greece, Æschylus (525–456 B.C.), Sophocles (496–406 B.C.), and Euripides (480–406 B.C.), dramatized the various phases of the legend. Eight of these dramas have come down to us. They are: The Orestean trilogy of Æschylus, also called the *Oresteia,* consisting of the *Agamemnon,* the *Choëphoræ,* and the *Eumenides;* the *Electra* of Sophocles, and the *Electra,* the *Orestes,* the *Iphigenia in Aulis,* and the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* of Euripides.†

* Cf. Carl Robert. *Bild und Lied. Archaeologische Beiträge zur Geschichte der griechischen Heldensage,* pp. 149–191. Berlin, 1881.

† Æschylus and Sophocles also dramatized the Iphigenia theme. Cf. Welcker, *Die Aeschyl. Tril.,* pp. 408 ff. and 415.

In moral significance, boldness of conception, and grandeur of language the Orestean trilogy of Æschylus represents perhaps the highest achievement of the Greek drama. One thought inspires the whole drama, that of guilt and retribution. The first play of the trilogy represents Agamemnon upon his triumphant return from Troy treacherously murdered by Clytæmnestra. The main stress is here laid upon the character of Clytæmnestra, who is the only assassin of her husband and a truly colossal figure. She acts with cold, calculating energy and is animated by a relentless hatred of her husband, because he allowed her favorite daughter Iphigenia to be sacrificed in Aulis. The poet assumes that the sacrifice really took place.

Retribution upon Clytæmnestra and her paramour Ægisthus is the theme of the second drama of the trilogy, the *Choëphoræ* (Libation-bearers). The drama is so called from the chorus, which is composed of captive Trojan women who have been sent by Clytæmnestra to pour libations upon the tomb of Agamemnon. Orestes, a child at the time of his father's murder, has grown up to manhood at the court of his uncle Strophius of Phocis. At the express command of Apollo he has been ordered to execute the blood-feud upon Ægisthus and Clytæmnestra and threatened with the severest penalties if he refused to obey. He accordingly proceeds to Argos, and finds Electra at the tomb of his father. Strengthened by her in his resolve, he slays Ægisthus and his mother. But immediately after the deed he is attacked by the Furies. He experiences a strange anguish, feels that he is going mad, and rushes away from the scene. It is important to note the spirit in which he commits the murder. He feels that it is monstrous to shed his mother's blood, but he knows that Apollo demands of him vengeance. Disobe-

dience to the god's will is the greater of the two evils, and so he resolutely proceeds to the deed. Only once—at the moment when his mother makes a most pathetic appeal to him—he hesitates, but when Pylades reminds him of the command of the god, he executes the deed. The attack of the Furies is not to be interpreted as meaning that he is overcome by remorse, for his attitude later on shows that he is fully convinced of the justice of his cause. According to the then prevalent views a matricide must be pursued by the Furies. The Furies are the avenging deities of unnatural crimes; such a crime has been committed, and hence they have gained the right to pursue Orestes. He knows what punishment he must incur by murdering his mother, and yet he does not falter in the duty he owes to his father. He is indeed 'pius facto et sceleratus eodem'.

The *Eumenides* fittingly close the tragedy. The deed of Orestes committed at the command of Apollo, the representative of the younger dynasty of gods, offended the Furies, who belong to the older divinities. They appear in the drama in bodily form and pursue Orestes, so that he is obliged to seek refuge in the shrine of his protecting god in Delphi. Apollo sends him to Athens to be tried before the court of the Areopagus with Pallas Athena as the presiding judge. The Furies, aroused by the ghost of Clytæmnestra, accuse Apollo of mocking them, the ancient divinities, and of stealing from them their victim. Apollo ejects them from his sanctuary, boldly asserting that the deed of Orestes was done at his command, because the violation of the marriage-bond demanded such action. The Furies then dog the steps of Orestes till he arrives in Athens. Before the court of the Areopagus the Furies are the accusers, Apollo the defender of Orestes. When the pleadings are over, the

judges of the Areopagus cast their votes, and the number is found equal. Athena then gives her casting vote in favor of Orestes and he is acquitted. The Furies are at first very wroth and threaten to call down curses and devastations upon the Athenian land, but Athena appeases them by promising them a shrine to be erected in their honor close to the hill of Areopagus. Henceforth they are to be venerated by the name of *Semnæ* (the venerable ones) or *Eumenides* (the gracious or benevolent ones), and are to be propitious goddesses who, though still continuing to punish crimes, will be ready to grant mercy to penitent sinners and give succor to all men. The appeased Furies then depart to their newly appointed home, calling down blessings upon Athens.

In this drama Orestes and his fortunes sink into the background, and the interest centers in great religious and moral issues represented by the ancient and the younger gods. Guilt is weighed against guilt, duty against duty. No reconciliation seems possible until Athena, the goddess of Wisdom, steps in and pardons Orestes. Orestes is but the object of conflicting divine agencies. His final release is not the result of inner repentance, but of a reconciliation of rival claims of powerful divinities.

THE ELECTRA OF SOPHOCLES.

The subject of this drama is the same as that of the *Choëphoræ* of Æschylus, except that the interest of the poet is here centered not so much in the large questions of Destiny, Justice, the Erinyes, but rather in human character, especially that of Electra. After the murder of her father she is filled with an implacable hatred of her unnatural mother and the insolent Ægisthus. The desire to avenge her father determines her whole being. She

lives in indignity and want, and will not resign herself to her fate. Her sole comfort is that by her daily wails she can disturb the happiness of the murderers. Orestes executes here the deed, as in the *Odyssey*, in a spirit of righteous retribution. It is a deed of merit about which no doubt can be entertained. Sophocles takes his stand upon the primitive belief according to which matricide is the simple duty of Orestes, involving no pollution and requiring no expiation. We find in him no conflict of claims, no choice between alternative penalties. The command of Apollo is brief, and its words show that the god expects no reluctance on the part of Orestes. When the deed is done, Electra displays nothing but exultation, and Orestes shows no signs of madness. There is not a hint in the drama of a persecution by the Furies. In fact the deed seems so meritorious to Electra and Orestes that both expect from it eternal and unqualified glory.

THE ELECTRA OF EURIPIDES.

There is an undoubted spirit of skepticism in Euripides toward the mythology of his countrymen. His age regarded him as a notorious free-thinker, and it is apparent that he had little sympathy with much of the legendary material which he dramatized. He frequently showed his hostility to the current polytheism by making his characters express doubt in the wisdom and justice of the gods. He did not admire the old heroic legends and therefore often treated them with an almost modern realism. His *Electra* is written in that spirit. The old heroic world is here stripped of its grandeur. Electra is married to a peasant and performs the ignoble office of a slave. She cherishes the deepest hatred against her mother and Ægisthus, bewails the disgraceful fate of her

father, and prays that the exiled Orestes may return to avenge Agamemnon. The new element introduced by Euripides is the degradation and personal suffering of Electra at the hands of her mother and Ægisthus. This personal wrong done to Electra furnishes her and Orestes with an additional motive for wishing to avenge themselves upon Clytæmnestra and her paramour. Ægisthus is killed in cold blood, but when Clytæmnestra approaches, Orestes is seized with a feeling of horror at the thought of the crime he is about to commit. The Orestes of Æschylus also falters for a moment, but upon being reminded of the oracle of Apollo he unflinchingly strikes the blow. The Orestes of Euripides, however, doubts the wisdom of Apollo, because the god commanded him to commit a deed which is repugnant to his natural feelings and which he must regard as an impious crime.* After the murder of Clytæmnestra Orestes is seized with remorse and anguish. At the end of the drama the Dioscuri, the brothers of Clytæmnestra, appear and pronounce her fate as just, though they doubt the wisdom of Phœbus in assigning the execution of the murder to Orestes.† They then declare that Orestes must leave Argos, that he is to be persecuted to madness by the avenging Furies, but that he is ultimately to be acquitted from guilt by the court of the Areopagus.—Whatever may be the poetic limitations of the play, it is certain that Euripides has succeeded in humanizing the conduct of Orestes. His doubts, his inner conflicts, and his consciousness of guilt are essentially modern.

* Cf. ll. 967 ff. † Cf. l. 1302.

THE ORESTES OF EURIPIDES.

This work is one of the most unequal dramas of Euripides, beginning with scenes of remorse and madness which are to be classed with his most inspired efforts, but ending with a series of intrigues and stratagems which are unworthy of a great poet. The action takes place on the sixth day after the murder of Ægisthus and Clytæmnestra, and what interests us particularly is the poet's conception of the character of Orestes. The hero is divided against himself. His attitude toward his crime ranges from absolute condemnation in his calmest moments to a justification of it when driven to extremes. We have here a conscience-stricken character, doubting the wisdom and benevolence of Apollo, and believing that the god incited him to a crime which Agamemnon himself would not have approved of. For the murder of Clytæmnestra could not restore the dead to life, but was sure to bring evil upon the living. He confesses that he suffers most from his own remorse, and that the Furies, terrible though they be, are a secondary affliction. In short, we have here a conception of Orestes which in some respects resembles that of Goethe.

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS OF EURIPIDES.

This drama is interesting to us because it represents the most momentous experience in the early youth of Iphigenia. Its action is in brief as follows: The Greek fleet has been detained in Aulis by thwarting winds, and the seer Calchas reveals to the leaders that the angry Artemis demands the sacrifice of Iphigenia as the price of a successful voyage. Agamemnon at first refuses to obey, but is finally persuaded by Menelaus and Odysseus

to yield. He sends a letter to Argos, directing Clytæmnestra to bring Iphigenia to the camp without delay, on the pretext that he wishes to give her in marriage to Achilles. But as the day of her arrival approaches, he shrinks from the dreadful deed, and sends another letter to his wife countermanding his previous order. This letter is, however, intercepted by his brother Menelaus, and Clytæmnestra arrives with Iphigenia and the infant Orestes in Aulis. Achilles knows nothing of the artifice in which his name was used to entice Iphigenia to Aulis, but soon the terrible design of Calchas is revealed to him and Clytæmnestra. The disconsolate mother appeals to Achilles for protection, and he, moved to pity for the helpless girl, promises to do everything to save Iphigenia from death. Then follows a meeting between Agamemnon and Clytæmnestra. She upbraids her husband in most violent terms; the terrified maiden makes a most pathetic appeal to her father for her life; Achilles returns prepared to go to extremes to shield Iphigenia. Then, after the first shock is past, a sudden change of mind takes place in Iphigenia. She resolves to resign herself willingly to death for the good of her people and to prevent a hopeless combat between her brave champion and the relentless army. Clytæmnestra is forced to acquiesce in this decision, and with a touching farewell to her mother and her infant brother the heroic maiden goes resolutely to the altar. In an epilogue, which is probably spurious, we are informed that when the fatal blow had been struck, it was discovered that the immolated body was that of a doe, and not of Iphigenia.—This drama was translated by Schiller in 1788.

THE LEGEND OF THE TAURIC IPHIGENIA.

THE legend of the release of Orestes from the Furies was a subject of such far-reaching interest to the Greeks that another legend was developed on the subject quite different from that dramatized by Æschylus, namely, the legend which represented the release of Orestes as conditioned by his capture of the image of Artemis from Tauris, where Iphigenia after her rescue from Aulis served as a priestess at the shrine of the goddess.* To understand and appreciate the theme of this drama of Euripides as compared with that of Goethe we must inquire into the origin of the legend.

Iphigenia was originally a moon-goddess, identified or associated with the goddess Artemis or Hecate, and worshipped in Greece and Asia Minor. She presided over births and, in general, was potent over the destinies of women. In prehistoric times she was appeased by human sacrifices, but with the progress of civilization this barbarous custom gradually disappeared, and, instead of being entirely abolished, was replaced in some cases by milder ceremonies which were curious reminiscences of the old sacrifices. So at Halæ, on the southeastern coast of Attica, there was in historic times a temple in honor of Artemis Tauropolos ('goddess of kine') containing a wooden image of the goddess. Annual festivals, called Tauropolia, were here celebrated, at which a man was led to the altar, as though he were a victim,

* It is still an unsettled question whether both forms of the legend lived in the popular consciousness at the same time and in equal strength, or whether the legend as treated by Æschylus is older and was gradually supplanted by the younger legend as found in Euripides.

and had blood drawn from his neck by a scratch of the sword. Also at Brauron, several miles southwest of Halæ, a goddess was worshipped who originally seems to have been called Iphigenia and in historical times the Brauronian Artemis.* Every five years a great festival was held at Brauron in her honor, at which Attic maidens brought she-goats as offerings to her.

The same custom of offering human sacrifices to a maiden goddess was practiced in ancient times in the Tauric Chersonese, the modern Crimea. Travelers who fell into the hands of the natives were slaughtered on a sea-cliff before the temple of this goddess. When the Greeks in the course of their voyages became acquainted with this people, the similarity of names and religious practices naturally led them to identify the Taurian goddess with their own Artemis Tauropolos. As the moral and religious life of the Greeks advanced, they regarded the human sacrifices hinted at in their own ceremonies in Halæ and Brauron as so brutal that they ascribed such practices to the barbarians in Tauris, and thus satisfied the scruples of their national conscience. Accordingly, the tradition gradually developed that after the image of Artemis had been rescued from Tauris and brought to Greece, the human sacrifices were abolished and replaced by the milder ceremonies in Halæ and Brauron with which they were familiar. Thus the transplanting of the image of the goddess to Greece was interpreted by the people as a deed of great national and religious significance, symbolizing the superiority of Greek civilization over the brutal religion of the barbarians.†

Just by what mythological process the daughter of

* Cf. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 1446–1467.

† *Cf. R.* Förster. *Iphigenie*. Breslau, 1895.

Agamemnon became associated with the goddess Artemis-Iphigenia-Tauropolos and was finally made a priestess of the latter must, like all similar mythological questions, remain a matter of conjecture. Suffice it to say that such transformations are not infrequent in mythology. It is the national import of the legend as finally developed that particularly concerns us here. The seizure by a Greek hero of the very ancient and sacred image of Artemis from a barbarous people addicted to human sacrifices, and its removal to Hellas, the land of superior civilization and humanity, appealed most strongly to the national consciousness of the Greeks and furnished the Greek dramatists with a most welcome theme. This glorious feat Euripides ascribes to Orestes and makes it the center of interest of his most finished drama.

IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURIANS OF EURIPIDES.

Euripides connects his drama with the *Eumenides* of Æschylus by assuming that only a part of the Furies accepted the judgment of Athena, while the rest refused to yield to it and continued to persecute Orestes.* The latter therefore again appealed to the oracle of Apollo, who promised him final deliverance if he carried away the wooden image of Artemis from Tauris to Attica. The action of the drama begins with the arrival of Orestes and Pylades in Tauris to execute the task demanded by Apollo.

The play opens with a prologue in which Iphigenia gives an account of her family, of her miraculous escape from Aulis through the intervention of the goddess, and her removal to Tauris, where as priestess of the goddess she has to perform the cruel duty of sacrificing all Greeks who arrive on the shores of the land. She also relates a

* Cf. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 961–971.

mysterious dream which she had on the previous night and which convinced her that her only brother Orestes was dead. Our attention is thus at once directed to the fate of Orestes. She then withdraws with her attendants to offer funeral rites to his shade. In the next scene Orestes and Pylades appear and reconnoiter the temple to find out how they can most readily get access to the statue. Finding the task very difficult, they decide to conceal themselves in the caves along the seashore till nightfall, when they expect to make the attempt. Iphigenia then returns and bewails the fate of her brother, of the house of Atreus and her own wretched destiny, when a herdsman enters and announces that two young Greeks after a stubborn fight have been captured on the seashore. The name of one of them is Pylades; the name of the other, who acted like one possessed by the Furies, is unknown. Iphigenia is addressed as 'the daughter of Agamemnon and Clytæmnestra', and so we must assume that her ancestry is known to the Taurians. She orders the captives to be brought to her, and believing that her brother is dead, she feels now no compassion for the strangers, although formerly she was wont to pity the unfortunate victims that were to be sacrificed by her. She wishes that Menelaus and Helen, through whom she and her family suffered so much, might be stranded upon the shores of Tauris so that she could wreak her vengeance upon them. But when her savage revengeful mood subsides, she expresses a protest against human sacrifices, and doubts whether gods can take pleasure in such cruel practices.

When the captives are brought to her, Iphigenia questions them about their home and parentage. Orestes resolves to die without revealing his identity, but finally mentions Mycenæ as his birthplace. By rapid inter-

change of questions Iphigenia then learns the fate of the Greek heroes before Troy, the tragic story of her family, and above all that Orestes still lives. This information gives a new turn to her thoughts. She proposes to save one of her captives on condition that the pardoned one bear for her a letter to a dear friend in Argos. The other captive is to be sacrificed to the goddess. Orestes is ready to die and begs that the letter be entrusted to Pylades. When Iphigenia withdraws to prepare the letter, there ensues the fine and celebrated scene in which the two friends vie with each other as to who should do the commission for the priestess and escape death. Finally Orestes prevails upon Pylades to go to Greece. Iphigenia then returns with the letter; Pylades takes an oath to deliver it safely, but fearing that it might be lost in shipwreck, he asks her to let him know its contents. Iphigenia then reads the letter addressed to her brother Orestes, in which she informs him of her miraculous escape from death in Aulis, and begs him to rescue her from the barbarous land of Tauris and bring her back to Argos. Pylades immediately hands the letter to Orestes. Then follows the recognition of brother and sister, after Orestes has furnished unmistakable proofs of his identity.

Orestes then explains to his sister his mission in Tauris. Iphigenia is eager to help him and return with him to Greece, but how can they elude the king and seize the image? Orestes proposes that they kill the king, but Iphigenia rejects this, for 'it would be a foul deed that strangers slay their host'. It seems impossible to carry away the image by stealth, because it is guarded day and night. Finally Iphigenia suggests a plan which must have strongly appealed to the Greek love of cunning. She intends to tell the king that the strangers, being tainted with crime, have polluted the image, and that

therefore she must purify it by carrying it down to the sea, attended only by her maidens. The captives, being unhallowed, must also, before their sacrifice, be bathed in the sea. When all three will have arrived at the seashore, they can board the ship which brought Orestes and Pylades to Tauris, and then sail with the image to Greece.

Her plot succeeds. Orestes and Pylades withdraw, and Thoas arrives just as Iphigenia is carrying the sacred image out of the temple. In the dialogue that follows the Greek heroine splendidly displays her craft and her intellectual superiority over the credulous and simple-minded barbarian. He believes her story of the pollution of the strangers and the image, and accepts her suggestion that the people, in order to escape contamination, should stay at home, while she and the strangers proceed to the seashore. She also makes him draw his mantle over his eyes when the strangers come from the temple, lest he become tainted with their crime. Thus, carrying the image, she effects her escape with her brother and Pylades, while Thoas remains behind to purify the temple with fire.

Suddenly a messenger arrives with the startling news that while Iphigenia was performing her mysterious rites of purification, a Greek ship appeared and took on board the two captives along with the priestess and the image. The Scythians tried to prevent it, but were unsuccessful. However, when the ship was about to depart, a gale arose and drove it on the rocks, so that the fugitives were again in the power of the king. The indignant Thoas, threatening terrible revenge, then bids his men to hasten to the seashore and bring back the fugitives. At this critical moment, when all seems lost, Pallas Athena appears and informs the king that all had happened in obedience to the command of Apollo, and bids him to

allow the prisoners, the priestess, and her attendants to return to Greece. She then instructs Orestes to place the image in Halæ in Attica, where certain rites are to be paid to the goddess Artemis. Iphigenia is upon her return to continue to serve the goddess as priestess in Brauron, near Halæ. Thoas religiously yields to the commands of Athena. The great mission of Orestes is thus accomplished, and all ends in peace.

Careful investigations of Goethe's *Iphigenie* have proved conclusively that Goethe drew freely from all the Greek dramas which treated of the legends of Orestes and Iphigenia, although naturally the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* of Euripides was his principal source.* He also derived a number of details concerning the Pelopidæ from the *Fabularum Liber* of Hyginus (64 B.C.—16 A.D.?). This work was a well-known Roman primer on mythology containing a collection of 227 fables, which are largely arguments of ancient plays, most of which are lost. Of special importance for Goethe's drama are Fables 85, 86, 88, 119, and 120. In fact the names of Chrysippus and Plisthenes, which occur in the earlier versions of the drama, he could have obtained only from Hyginus.† In the notes reference has been made to the other classical sources which have or may have influenced some passages of Goethe's drama. Most important of these is the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, the relation of which to Goethe's *Iphigenie* will be discussed later, and the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer, the influence of which permeates the whole drama.

* Cf. Hans Morsch. *Goethe und die griechischen Bühnendichter*. Progr. Berlin, 1888.

† Cf. notes to ll. 342 and 366.

THE LEGENDS OF ORESTES AND IPHIGENIA IN FRENCH AND GERMAN LITERATURE BEFORE GOETHE.

French classicism favored the dramatization of subjects taken from Greek and Roman history and mythology. Accordingly, various phases of the Orestes and Iphigenia legends were dramatized by French poets in the 17th and 18th centuries. In Germany Gottsched (1700–1766) tried to reform and elevate the German drama by the study and imitation of the French classic dramas. Several German dramatists who stood under the influence of his doctrines adapted some of the French dramas on the Orestes and Iphigenia themes for the German stage.

The most famous of the Iphigenia dramas in France is Racine's *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1674), which, however, is based upon an entirely different tradition from that followed by Goethe, and had no influence upon him. It is interesting to note that Racine conceived but afterward abandoned the plan of writing an *Iphigénie en Tauride*. A prose sketch of the first act of this proposed drama has come down to us, from which we infer that the love of the son of Thoas for Iphigenia was to form an important element in the dramatic action.* More important from the point of view of its influence upon the German Iphigenia dramas is La Grange Chancel's *Oreste et Pylade ou Iphigénie en Tauride* (1699), a typical French classical drama, which maintained itself upon the French stage for half a century. Upon this drama of La Grange are based the dramas of Johann Elias Schlegel (1719–1749) and Christoph Friedrich von Derschau (1714–1799). In

* Cf. Racine in *Les grands écrivains de la France*, Vol. IV, 1–14. This prose sketch was first made known in 1747.

1737 Schlegel wrote the drama *Geschwister auf Taurien*, which shows distinctly the influence of La Grange and Euripides. In 1747 appeared Derschau's drama *Orest und Pylades oder das Denkmal der Freundschaft*, which follows very closely the work of La Grange.* In 1757 Guimond de la Touche's *Iphigénie en Tauride* was produced with much enthusiasm upon the French stage, and retained its popularity for many years on account of its noble diction and pure verse.† It shows to some extent a dependence upon La Grange, but is largely determined by the school of Voltaire, especially by his *Mérope* (1743). This drama of Guimond de la Touche was the model for the libretto which Nicolas François Guillard wrote in 1778 for Gluck's famous opera *Iphigénie en Tauride*, produced in Paris in 1779.‡

Besides these dramas, which deal more specifically with the Iphigenia theme, the works of Crébillon (1674–1763), Voltaire (1694–1778), and Gotter (1746–1797) on related themes should be considered. In 1707 Crébillon's *Atrée et Thyeste* and in 1708 his *Électre* appeared; Voltaire's drama, *Oreste*, was produced in 1750. Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter (1746–1797), who stood under the direct influence of Voltaire and for a time was on terms of intimacy with Goethe, wrote two dramas which are of special importance from the point of view of their relation to Goethe's *Iphigenie*: *Orest und Elektra* and *Merope*. The former was produced in Weimar in 1772, the latter in 1773.

It is difficult to determine to what extent these French and German dramas influenced Goethe's *Iphigenie*.

* *Archiv für Litteraturgeschichte* XI, 364, and *Ersch und Gruber*, I, 24, 219.

† Edited by A. Lundehn, Berlin, 1877.

‡ This opera was not known to Goethe when he wrote the first version of his *Iphigenie* in 1779.

Goethe was an efficient French scholar and took a keen interest in the contemporary literature of his country, so that we may assume that these dramas did not escape his notice. Morsch in his very careful investigation of this subject * has made it seem probable that several of these dramas have left distinct traces of their influence upon Goethe's work. Motives, situations, and expressions occur in these dramas which at once suggest some passages in Goethe's *Iphigenie.* Some of these resemblances are doubtless due to the same classical sources used by Goethe and his predecessors, others seem to point to a direct though probably unconscious influence of the older dramas upon Goethe. The most striking of these parallels have been cited in the notes. The ground is here very uncertain and must be approached with great caution. In many instances it is impossible to assert unreservedly that Goethe was dependent upon his predecessors, for some of these resemblances may be purely accidental, while others may be naturally accounted for by the analogous characters and situations of the dramas.

There is one remarkable agreement between La Grange-Chancel and Goethe. Both represent Thoas as a suitor of Iphigenia and as rejected by the priestess on the ground that the gods do not approve of such a union. Gotter's *Orest und Elektra* presents the largest number of parallel situations and passages. In this drama and in Voltaire's *Oreste,* which was its model, we find a suggestion of that spirit of large humanity which permeates the best literature of the 18th century and of which Goethe's *Iphigenie* is perhaps the noblest expression. In Gotter's and Goethe's dramas the instinctive love of the sister for the

* H. Morsch, *Vorgeschichte von Goethe's Iphigenie. Vierteljahrschrift für Litteraturgeschichte,* Vol. IV, pp. 80–115.

brother plays an important rôle and is the characteristically modern element in both dramas. There is also a situation in Gotter's drama (V, 9) which in some respects is very similar to the second scene of the third act of Goethe's *Iphigenie.* There Gotter's Orestes, like Goethe's hero, believes himself in Hades, meets and addresses Agamemnon, Clytæmnestra, and Ægisthus, and wishes to be led to his great ancestor Tantalus. In general Gotter's conception of Orestes resembles Goethe's. He represents him as deeply oppressed by his sense of guilt and as longing to be released from the hereditary curse of the family (IV, 5; V, 3; V, 8). Thus it may be said that Gotter's drama, though an inferior production, furnished Goethe with several valuable suggestions which he developed in his *Iphigenie.*

GOETHE'S RELATION TO CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY UP TO 1779.

Goethe's acquaintance with the ancients dates back to his boyhood. His father, who personally directed his education, laid great stress upon the study of ancient and modern languages. As the boy was intended for the law, the study of Latin was especially emphasized, whereas Greek was treated rather superficially. His father's library was well provided with good editions of the Roman classics, translations, and various books on classical antiquity, so that the boy before going to the university had developed a strong interest for the ancients. He had then a fairly good knowledge of Roman literature, but his knowledge of Greek did not extend much beyond the ability to read the New Testament in the original. He early became interested in Homer, but on account of his limited knowledge of Greek was obliged to read

him in translations. In fact, even during his university period and some time after he had to depend for his knowledge of the Greek classics largely upon Latin, German, and French translations. The pictures in his paternal home also strongly stimulated his interest in the classical world. His father had visited Italy in his youth, had developed there a love for Italian art and life, and had in his collection many pictures of Roman monuments and copies of Italian paintings which aroused the boy's desire to see some day that wondrous land of art and beauty. All these influences made the boy wish to go to the University of Goettingen and devote himself there to the study of classical philology with the purpose of some day entering upon an academic career. The father, however, decided the question of vocation for him, and in 1765 he went to the University of Leipzig to study law.

His academic studies in Leipzig were lacking in definiteness of purpose and organization. Feeling little interest in the abstractions and formalisms of law, and vaguely longing for a larger self-development, the young student neglected his professional work, and took up in a desultory way the study of history, philosophy, literature, and art. He attended the lectures of the distinguished philologist Ernesti, and read Quintilian, the *Ars Poetica* of Horace, the *Poetics* of Aristotle, but could then hardly appreciate the real significance of these writings.

More fruitful than this desultory philological work were his art studies in Leipzig. He was introduced to the theory of art by Adam Friedrich Oeser (1717–1799), a painter of moderate talents, but a stimulating teacher. Oeser was the enthusiastic friend and admirer of Winckelmann (1717–1768), the greatest art critic and classical archæologist in the 18th century, whose monumental

work on the *History of Ancient Art* (1764) paved the way for the modern historical study of ancient art. It was Oeser who introduced young Goethe to the works of Winckelmann and to Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766), and these works the poet regarded as among the most potent influences of his sojourn in Leipzig. Oeser's teaching that the ideal of beauty was simplicity and repose impressed him profoundly. Of Lessing's *Laokoon* he says in his autobiography: 'It was a beam of light . . . which that most excellent thinker brought down to us through the clouds. One must be a young man to realize the effect which Lessing's *Laokoon* produced upon us by transporting us out of the region of scanty perception to the open fields of thought.' * This essay, besides enlightening the young Goethe on the essential differences between the laws of art and poetry, intensified his enthusiasm for Greek art and literature by its fine analysis of the beauties of Homeric poetry and the Greek drama.

Of all the contemporary German poets Wieland (1733–1813) attracted him most during the Leipzig period, because he regarded the spirit of his works as most nearly akin to the artistic ideals of Winckelmann. Wieland, an essentially Epicurean nature, after emancipating himself from his early pietistic influences, turned to Greek antiquity for his guidance in life and art. He was regarded by his contemporaries as a Greek, because he often chose a Greek background for his novels and poems, and preached the Epicurean philosophy of life. In 1766–67 his *Geschichte des Agathon* appeared, which, though saturated with the rationalism of the 18th century, is Greek in costume and scenery. In 1768 *Musarion oder die Philosophie der Grazien* appeared, which especially ap-

* Cf. *Werke* (Weimar Ed.), Vol. XXVII, p. 164.

pealed to the young Goethe because he regarded it as a modern reproduction of Greek life.*

Goethe left Leipzig Aug. 28, 1768, for Frankfurt. Here he remained for almost two years trying to recover his undermined health. This second Frankfurt period, although important for his philosophical and religious development, did little for the enlargement of his knowledge of classical antiquity. His classical studies received a new impulse in Strassburg, where he arrived April 2, 1770, to finish his course in law. Goethe's Strassburg period is perhaps the most fruitful in his life. It would lead us too far to develop here how radically his views on life and art were changed in Strassburg, and how these new ideas determined his Storm and Stress productions. Suffice it to say that this great change in Goethe was wrought largely through Herder (1744–1803), who, though only five years Goethe's senior, had already published several works which in originality and suggestiveness at once raised him to the foremost rank of German thinkers. In opposition to the doctrines of Gottsched that poetry was an art that could be learned by the study and application of rules derived from the works of the ancients and the French classic writers, Herder taught that true art and poetry, however manifold their forms might be, were necessary, spontaneous expressions of national life. In the poetry of the Old Testament, in the folk-songs, in Shakespeare, Ossian, and Homer he found brilliant examples of the validity of his principles.

The teachings of Herder gave Goethe new standards for the study of literature, enabled him to distinguish

* Cf. Seuffert, *Der junge Goethe und Wieland. Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 252 ff.

between true and artificial poetry, and definitely emancipated him from the imitation of French models. The great national poets became now the object of his enthusiastic study, especially Shakespeare and Homer. Recognizing that translations could reproduce the matter but not the spirit of poetry, he resumed the study of Greek so as to be able to read Homer in the original. But as his study of the language was very unsystematic, he never acquired a sufficient mastery of it to read the more difficult Greek authors without the aid of translations.* His reverence for classical antiquity during his Strassburg period was nobly expressed in his poem *Der Wanderer* (begun 1770, finished 1772).

In his correspondence after the Strassburg period we find frequent references to the Greeks. He studied Plato in preparation for his projected drama *Leben und Tod des Sokrates*, and took special delight in reading Theocritus, Anacreon, and Pindar.† The influence of Pindar is distinctly noticeable in several of the finest lyrical poems of this period. In Wetzlar, where he went in May, 1772, his classical studies, and especially his readings of Homer and Pindar, were continued.‡ His correspondence of this period abounds in Homeric expressions; in the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen* he takes up the cause of Homer.§ We can best study his enthusiasm for Homer

* For the manner in which he learned to read Homer in the original cf. his letter to Frau von Laroche of Nov. 1774. For the difficulty which he experienced in Greek cf. his letter to Schiller of Sept. 28, 1800.

† Cf. *Wanderers Sturmlied* (1772), in which Anacreon, Theocritus, and Pindar are characterized.

‡ Cf. A. Kestner, *Goethe und Werther*, 1854, p. 35.

§ Cf. especially his discussion of Robert Wood's *Versuch über das Originalgenie des Homer.*

at this time in his world-famous romance *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. The sentimental Werther compares the simplicity of his life with the patriarchal conditions of the Homeric world. The reading of Homer is soothing to his troubled heart, and when he has bitter experiences in aristocratic society, he returns to his home to find solace in Homer. Only at the end of the work, when deep melancholy takes possession of the hero, he turns from the cheerful world of Homer to the sad, formless, misty world of Ossian.*

Goethe states in his autobiography that he found in Greek mythology 'an inexhaustible wealth of divine and human symbols.' He accordingly treated several mythological themes in his poems of this period. The grandest of these is his fragment *Prometheus* (1774), written in the spirit of the Pindaric odes, the first larger poem in which he adapted an antique theme to modern meanings, and one of the most powerful expressions of Goethe's revolutionary spirit and his pantheistic belief at that time. The Titan Prometheus, having served Zeus many years, discovers the inadequacy and narrowness of the rule of the Olympians and breaks forth in open rebellion against them. He turns away from the outward gods of tradition and dogma to devote himself to the god who dwells within his heart, who is not distinguishable from his inmost being, who is at once wisdom and love and the determination to express himself in immortal creative activity.

Goethe describes in his autobiography his spirit of revolt at that time as follows: 'The bolder members of that race (of Titans), Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus, were also my saints. Admitted to the society of the gods, they would

* Cf. H. Schreyer, *Goethe und Homer*, 1884, p. 24.

not conduct themselves with due submission; by their haughty bearing as guests they merited the wrath of their hospitable patron and brought upon themselves a sad exile. I pitied them. Their condition had already been set forth by the ancients as truly tragic, and when I introduced them in the background of my Iphigenia as members of a terrible opposition, I probably owed to them a part of the effect which this piece had the good fortune to produce.' *

His polemic against Wieland in 1774 shows most distinctly his attitude toward the Greeks at that time. We have seen that in Leipzig Goethe was an admirer of Wieland because he then regarded his works as Hellenic in spirit. Wieland's popularity had, however, waned during the first years of the Storm and Stress period because of the light, worldly, and at times even licentious character of his stories and poems. Besides, the Storm and Stress poets in their boundless enthusiasm for Shakespeare found Wieland's translation of his dramas (1762-1766) utterly inadequate and his notes an injustice to the English dramatist. The spirit of opposition against him broke forth in 1773. In that year Wieland wrote a libretto *Alceste* for the opera of Anton Schweitzer, and then published in his journal, *Der teutsche Merkur*, five letters upon his work in which he compared his libretto with the *Alcestis* of Euripides, and claimed a superiority for his own production on the ground that he had idealized the old classic theme and had treated the ancient gods and heroes in the modern spirit. The pretentious tone of Wieland's letters and especially his insistence upon the importance of observing literary laws aroused

* *Werke* (Weimar Ed.), XXVIII, p. 314. Cf. here also his poem *Grenzen der Menschheit.*

the indignation of the Storm and Stress poets, and particularly of Goethe. Goethe, who now viewed Greek literature from Herder's historical standpoint, felt that Wieland had wronged the Greeks, and so on a Sunday afternoon he dashed off at one sitting his famous satire *Götter, Helden und Wieland.* It was published through the instrumentality of his friend Lenz in 1774. We cannot discuss here the merits of the controversy. For us the satire is significant in that it shows that Goethe was then an enthusiastic admirer of the Greek drama, and especially of Euripides and Aristophanes.† He read the drama of Euripides with the help of the French translation of Brumoy, *Théâtre des Grecs* (Paris, 1730), the translation which was afterward used also by Schiller. Though Goethe's interpretation of Euripides in this satire is in part erroneous, it shows an astonishing appreciation of some of the essential characteristics of the Greek dramatist.—Goethe's opposition to Wieland soon disappeared, and a lasting friendship was established between them in Weimar.

From the foregoing sketch it appears that the circumstances of Goethe's life aroused in him from his earliest youth a deep interest in Greek life and literature. Though his knowledge of the Greek masterpieces was very general and imperfect in his Storm and Stress period, he instinctively felt their superior beauty and value for his artistic development. It is therefore but natural that, notwithstanding his many court distractions and public duties in Weimar, he continued to study assiduously Greek literature. Moreover, the spirit of the Weimar court was very favorable to classical cul-

† The satire against Wieland and the farce *Satyros* (1773 or 1774) show distinctly the influence of Aristophanes.

ture. Wieland, on account of his large acquaintance with antiquity and his good knowledge of Greek, was regarded by the Weimar court as the authoritative interpreter of the classics, and through his personal influence and his writings did much to arouse an interest for and promote the cause of classical culture. Knebel worked in the same spirit and was justly called later by Jean Paul 'der Hausfreund der Alten'. Herder was from his youth a broad and most sympathetic student of the Greeks and had an unusual insight into their art and civilization. Goethe was on intimate terms with these men, and doubtless derived much stimulus and help from them. He also followed with lively interest the various attempts of Bürger, Bodmer, and Stolberg to translate Homer, and hailed Voss' translation of the *Odyssey* (1781) as a great service to the cause of the Greek poet. But his special attention was devoted to the reading of the Greek dramatists,* so that he was well acquainted with the best productions of Greek literature when he began to work upon his *Iphigenie.*

THE GENESIS OF GOETHE'S IPHIGENIE.

Goethe himself tells us in his autobiography that his works are fragments of a great confession.† A great passion or a significant experience generally produced in him a feeling of deep unrest. He pondered over it for weeks or months and did not feel relieved until he found for it some adequate poetic expression. While in this mood, the report of some event, or more frequently the in-

* Cf. Riemer, *Mittheilungen* II, 624, and his letter to Frau v. Stein of Sept. 12, 1780.

† *Werke*, XXI, p. 65.

cidents and characters of some book, suddenly stimulated his imagination to poetic creation. Something in the book he chanced to read so strongly suggested to him his own recent struggles that he more or less unconsciously interpreted the incidents and characters of the book in terms of his own experience. Sometimes the relation of the poet's life to the subject chosen seems distant and obscure, but a closer study of his life will usually disclose to us the reason why the subject roused him to poetic activity. It is therefore of prime importance for the understanding of Goethe's work to discover what phase of a subject stimulated him and why it did so, for in this way we can get the clearest insight into his artistic purposes. 'In every work of art', says Goethe, 'great or small, everything, even to the minutest details, depends upon the conception.' *

Some of the experiences underlying Goethe's *Iphigenie* are doubtless to be found in his Storm and Stress period. In this most productive period of his life he was often agitated by a spirit of feverish unrest which at times drove him to the brink of despair. His extreme individualism led him to defy conventionality in every form, in religion, in society, and in art, and to trust the strong instincts of his genius in all relations of life. Therefore the great mythical heroes of antiquity who had rebelled against the rule of the Olympians appealed so strongly to his sympathies. With this attitude toward life it was inevitable that the duties which he believed he owed to himself often clashed with the rights of established society. And so he became involved in several perplexing and painful relations from which he could extricate himself only by destroying the peace of mind or the happi-

* *Sprüche in Prosa*, No. 234.

ness of those whom he deeply loved. Such experiences resulted in self-reproach and remorse from which the sensitive poet tried to find relief in poetry. We need but recall the story of his loves during this period to realize the extent and depth of these inner conflicts. For his infidelity to Friederike he condemned himself more severely than any of his unfavorable critics, and gave poetic expression to it in his *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Clavigo.* But his most significant experience of this kind before his departure for Weimar in the fall of 1775 was his relation to Anna Elisabeth Schönemann, or Lili, as Goethe calls her in his lyrics. His account of this relation in the autobiography and his later utterances show that he sincerely loved her.* However, shortly after his engagement to her, when the first flush of joy had subsided, the thought of the marriage-bond made him uneasy and, as in the case of Friederike several years before, he longed for release. He welcomed the arrival of the two Counts von Stolberg in Frankfurt, and accepted their invitation to join them in a tour through Switzerland 'as an experiment to see whether he could renounce her'. But in the midst of the grandest Alpine landscapes the image of Lili was ever before him, calling him back to his native land. Finally, at the summit of St. Gotthard, with Italy before him, his longing to see her proved irresistible, and he returned to Frankfurt. But here the former state of indecision soon reappeared, strengthened by petty irritations and intrigues on the part of both families. So he spent several unhappy months, troubled by jealousy and doubt, and unable to make the firm resolve to marry her or give her up. The fact was that

* Cf. *Eckermann's Gespräche* of March 5, 1830, where Goethe speaks of Lili as the first and last whom he truly loved.

he was then most unsettled in his aims and duties in life, and could not even decide the question of his permanent vocation. He instinctively felt the need of a larger self-development; his restless poetic nature rebelled against every suggestion of constraint. The words of Fernando in *Stella* (1775) well express his conflict at that time and suggest the solution. He says: 'This condition [of marriage] stifles all my powers, this condition robs my soul of all courage, it cramps me. How much lies dormant within me! How much could be developed! I must away into the free world.' *

The penalty of his inconstancy were pangs of conscience and moods of the deepest dejection. This appears in his correspondence with Countess Auguste von Stolberg, sister of his friends, the Counts von Stolberg. This correspondence is remarkable in that he had never seen her and yet felt that a strong bond of sympathy existed between them. Ever since his boyhood he felt the need of confessing his inner conflicts to friends, especially to women,† and such confessions had a calming influence upon him. And so in 1775 he confessed his experiences to Auguste von Stolberg and gratefully acknowledged the soothing effect of her letters upon him. His letters to her reveal a passionate nature divided against itself and longing for self-restraint, moderation, and harmony. His relations to Lili were such that whatever course of conduct he chose, was sure to be followed by disappointment and misery. In this frame of mind it occurred to him that his condition resembled in some respects that of

* *Werke*, Vol. XI, p. 412.

† Of such a nature were among others his relations to Frau Böhme, Friederike Oeser, Fräulein von Klettenberg, Charlotte Buff, and above all to his sister Cornelia before her marriage to Schlosser in 1773.

Orestes. And so we find in a letter to Frau Karsch of Aug. 17, 1775 (about a month after his return from Switzerland), the following significant sentence: 'Perhaps the invisible scourge of the Eumenides will soon drive me out again from my fatherland'—a sentence which clearly shows that he then viewed his inner conflicts under the form of the sufferings of Orestes.*

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that in the fall of 1775 he gratefully accepted Duke Karl August's invitation to come to Weimar. But the joys and distractions of the first wild weeks at the court of Weimar did not afford him the relief from his moods of unrest and dejection he expected. This relief came from a quieter and deeper source: from the friendship of Frau v. Stein. This friendship is one of Goethe's most significant experiences during his first ten years of residence in Weimar, in that it profoundly affected his character and all the great works conceived during this period, especially the *Iphigenie*. We must therefore acquaint ourselves with the nature of this relation.

GOETHE AND FRAU VON STEIN.

On his return from the Swiss journey in the summer of 1775 Goethe stopped in Strassburg, and was shown there by the physician Zimmermann a silhouette of Charlotte von Stein intended for Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente*. Goethe examined it with much interest and wrote under it the following words: 'It would be a glorious spectacle to see how the world is

* Schröer in his edition of *Iphigenie* asserts that the character of Orestes in the *Orestes* of Euripides gave Goethe the initial impulse for his drama. Cf. Goethe, *Werke* (Deutsche National-Litteratur) Vol. IX, pp. xxi ff.

mirrored in this soul. She sees the world as it is, and yet through the medium of love.' The admiration called forth by this silhouette developed into passion shortly after he met her in Weimar.

She was the wife of a respectable but rather commonplace nobleman who was attached to the Court of Weimar in the capacity of master of the horse. The marriage, though not unhappy, was devoid of love. When Goethe met her, she was past thirty and mother of a large family. Some years after her first acquaintance with Goethe, Schiller described her as follows: 'She never could have been beautiful, but her countenance has a gentle seriousness and quite a peculiar openness. A sound understanding, feeling, and truth lie in her being.' * She was a woman of the intellectual rather than the emotional type, and had developed a self-possession and calmness of manner which were in marked contrast to the restless spirit of the poet. Cares and poor health had given her a touch of melancholy which led her to withdraw as far as possible from the gayeties of the court and find pleasure in a more reflective life. She felt a keen interest in the rising literature of her country, and had the power to grasp the thoughts of others and hold them fast. Goethe's previous loves had been young girls, naïve, beautiful, charming, but intellectually far beneath him; in Frau von Stein he found a woman of high rank, of culture and experience, who knew much about the conduct of life which he had yet to learn. Above all he realized that she understood him better than any woman he had previously known, and to this fact we must ascribe the power and influence she wielded over him for so many years. Ac-

* Schiller's letter to Körner of Aug. 12, 1787.

quaintance rapidly developed into intimacy, and she soon became his closest confidant and the object of his passionate adoration. In January, 1776, the series of the poet's letters to her began, in which for the next ten years we find the most faithful record of his intellectual and emotional life. Grimm calls these love-letters 'one of the most beautiful and touching memorials found in all literature'. The poet confesses to her everything, from the trivial happenings of his daily life to his most serious thoughts on poetry, philosophy, and science. His love was at first impassioned and stormy; he vaguely hoped that some day they might be united. Gradually the impossibility of such a union dawned upon him, and when at last he realized that he must abandon such hopes, their relation assumed a more natural and calmer tone.

The influence she exerted upon him he frequently expressed in most enthusiastic terms. He could not comprehend the secret of her influence, but he powerfully felt it. He felt that with her help he was realizing his best self, that a look, a word from her often dispelled the visions and spectres of his morbid fancy. He begged for her presence, and was in despair when she left Weimar for a few days. He called her 'his comforter', 'his soother', 'his angel', 'his golden lady'. Her presence calmed him, her voice soothed the agitation of his heart. In the poem addressed to her Apr. 14, 1776, he describes his relation to her in the following beautiful and significant lines:

„Sag was will das Schicksal uns bereiten?
Sag wie band es uns so rein genau?
Ach du warst in abgelebten Zeiten
Meine Schwester oder meine Frau.

Kanntest jeden Zug in meinem Wesen,
Spähtest wie die reinste Nerve klingt,

> Konntest mich mit *einem* Blicke lesen
> Den so schwer ein sterblich Aug' durchdringt.
> Tropftest Mäßigung dem heißen Blute,
> Richtetest den wilden irren Lauf,
> Und in deinen Engelsarmen ruhte
> Die zerstörte Brust sich wieder auf." *

Frau von Stein doubtless helped him to attain that self-control, moderation, and harmony of spirit for which he had vainly striven in Frankfurt. In his diary of Aug. 7, 1779, he gives us a very interesting retrospect of his life which throws much light upon the struggles of his early Weimar period. He says: 'A calm glance back on my past life, on the confusion, activity, youthful passion for knowledge, how it roams about everywhere to find something satisfying. How, especially, I found delight in mysteries—in dark imaginary relations.... With how little insight I moved round and round in human and divine things. How there was as little of action as of thought and poetry directed to an aim; how many days were wasted in time-destroying sentiment and shadow passions; how little good came to me therefrom; and how, now that half of life is past, there is no way back, but I simply stand here as one who saved himself from the water and whom the sun begins beneficently to dry. The time I have spent in the rush of the world since October, 1775, I do not yet trust myself to review. God help further and give us light so that we may not stand so much in our way.... May the idea of purity, extending even to the morsel I take into my mouth, become ever more luminous in me!'

It is to be expected that a relation which exercised such a beneficent influence upon his whole being, which he once described as the purest, fairest, truest in which,

* *Cf.* here also his *Wanderers Nachtlied.*

with the exception of his sister, he ever stood to any woman,* should have left a deep impression upon the poetic productions conceived during this period. In the *Geschwister, Elpenor, Tasso,* in the character of Natalie in *Wilhelm Meister,* and especially in *Iphigenie,* the influence of Charlotte von Stein is of vital importance. We have seen that in his Storm and Stress period his rebellious attitude toward the established social order aroused his interest in mythical characters of the type of Prometheus or Tantalus, and that in the midst of the Lili episode, when troubled by his conscience, he conceived himself as a kind of Orestes tormented by the Furies. In periods of inner conflicts he frequently sought and found comfort in the friendship of noble, kindly, sympathetic women. His letters to the Countess von Stolberg in 1775 show how especially at that time he felt the need of such spiritual companionship. In his friendship with Frau von Stein he found the realization of all that for which his heart then craved. No previous friendship had ever given him such consolation and peace, no woman had ever helped him so much in reducing his discordant unhappy being to a noble harmony. In the beneficent influence of Charlotte von Stein upon Goethe we shall find the central idea of his *Iphigenie.* The figure of the unhappy Orestes tormented by his conscience, driven from his native country, and finding release from the Furies in a strange land through the unexpected help of his sister, became to him a striking symbol of his own great spiritual experiences in his adopted home. His imagination once stirred by this symbol, and the lonely Tauric priestess of the antique legend gradually assumed the form and character of Charlotte

* Cf. Letter to Frau v. Stein of May 24, 1776.

von Stein, whom his fancy conceived in past ages to have been his sister or his wife. The purely ritual atonement of the Greek Orestes was given a psychological interpretation and was made to express the spiritual purification wrought in the poet through the influence of noble womanhood. In no way could the poet better express his deep gratitude to his friend.

THE WORK ON IPHIGENIE IN WEIMAR.

It is still a matter of doubt just when the thought of dramatizing the story of the Tauric Iphigenia first occurred to Goethe, but from the experiences just related it is probable that the first conception of the drama belongs to the year 1776.* During the next three years, under the continued influence of Frau von Stein, the plan developed and took such a definite form that when he set about to write the drama in 1779, he could finish it in a few weeks. This view seems confirmed by Riemer, who reports that Goethe told him of an inscription written by him on a fly-leaf which ran as follows: 'Schwalbenstein near Ilmenau. Sereno die, quieta mente, I wrote after a deliberation of *three* years the fourth act of my *Iphigenie* in one day.' † And from the diary we learn that this fourth act was written March 19, 1779. Herman Grimm also assigns the year 1776 as the time of the first conception, but for different reasons.‡ The astonish-

* It is noteworthy that according to his diary of Sept. 14, 1776, he read Lenz' *Tantalus* (*Werke*, Vol. III, pp. 200 ff.), in which Lenz treats of his unfortunate experiences in terms of the legend.

† Riemer, *Mittheilungen über Goethe*, Vol. II, p. 83, note 3.

‡ H. Grimm, Goethe. 6. Aufl. pp. 275 ff. Grimm's argument connecting the first conception of Goethe's *Iphigenie* with the death of the young niece of Gluck, the famous composer, seems untenable. Gluck's niece died in 1776, and

ing rapidity with which the first version of the drama was finished in 1779 in spite of numerous interruptions, its excellent dramatic organization, and the clear and definite conception of its characters, almost force us to the conclusion that the plan of the work had well matured in the poet's mind before the actual writing began.

The first mention of the drama we find in Goethe's diary of Feb. 14, 1779, when he writes: 'Began early this morning to dictate Iphigenia.' * From this time on we have in the poet's letters and diaries and in his *Italian Journey* a complete record of the progress of the drama in all its stages up to its final appearance in 1787. The first version was finished on March 28, 1779, after he had worked six weeks upon it. During this short period he was frequently interrupted by his numerous duties in the duchy of Weimar, especially by a journey he had to make for levying recruits and superintending the work on the highways. But his interest in the drama was so great that he took it with him on this trip and devoted to it all his leisure moments. The play was intended, like *Elpenor*, for a court festival-play in honor, probably, of the duchess Louise, who had recently given birth to a daughter. The drama was produced before the ducal court on April 6, 1779. Goethe himself appeared

the composer wished to write a *cantata* in her memory. He appealed to Wieland for a text, who, being otherwise occupied, requested Goethe to write it. Goethe set about the work at once, and his theme, according to Grimm, was *Iphigenie*. But according to Erich Schmidt *Proserpina* (publ. 1778), and not *Iphigenie*, was originally intended by Goethe for Gluck's *cantata*. Cf. *Vierteljahrschrift für Litteraturgeschichte*, Vol. I, pp. 27 ff.

* The word 'dictate' seems to suggest that the idea of the drama was at that time already developed in his mind.

as Orestes, Prince Constantin, the duke's younger brother, played the part of Pylades, Knebel was Thoas, and the beautiful and talented actress, Corona Schroeter, played the rôle of Iphigenia. In the audience there were, among others, Herder, Wieland, Musaeus, Seckendorf, Louise von Göchhausen, and Frau von Stein. The physician Hufeland, who was also present at the performance, described Goethe's appearance as follows: 'Never will I forget the impression which Goethe made as Orestes in Greek costume in the representation of his *Iphigenie*. We believed to see an Apollo. Never was there seen a like union of physical and spiritual perfection and beauty.'* Goethe's diary records that the effect of the drama was good, especially on pure men. It was repeated on April 12, and at the third performance of July 12 the duke himself took the part of Pylades.

The fame of the new drama soon spread, and offers from various quarters came to Goethe to publish it. But he was by no means satisfied with it; he regarded it as merely a sketch for the artistic execution of which much labor would still be needed, and therefore definitely declined publication. On July 21, 1779, he wrote to Karl Theodor von Dalberg, who wished to have it represented upon the Mannheim stage: 'It is much too carelessly written to be allowed to venture at once from the amateur stage into the open world.'

This first version of the drama, called A, was written in prose because great prejudice then existed against the use of verse in the drama, which was rejected by the Storm and Stress movement as unnatural. Hence prose became the fashion of the day. The prose of Goethe's *Iphigenie* was, however, very unlike the realistic prose

* *Robert* Keil, *Vor Hundert Jahren*, Vol. II, p. 167.

of his *Götz von Berlichingen*; it was noble and elevated in tone, and, like that of *Egmont*, had a pronounced iambic movement. Nevertheless Goethe felt that the form would have to be thoroughly revised, and made the first attempt in that direction in the spring of 1780, when the rhythmic prose text was divided off into metrical lines of unequal length, resembling somewhat the metrical form of Wieland's *Alceste*. This first metrical version, called B, was somewhat hastily and mechanically made without any essential changes in content and style.*

Goethe was also dissatisfied with this first metrical version and soon decided upon another revision. On Oct. 13, 1780, he wrote to Lavater: 'I do not like to have my *Iphigenie* in its present form frequently copied and circulated, because I am busy giving it still more harmony of style, and am therefore making changes here and there.' He was working on this second revision in 1781,† and finished it toward the end of that year. This version (C) is written in prose, and although it shows in expression and in the treatment of the dialogue a number of decided improvements over the first prose version (A), it did not yet satisfy the poet. He admitted that it was hurriedly done.‡ He had several copies of

* For a full discussion of the various versions and texts of *Iphigenie* cf. Michels in Goethe's *Werke*, Vol. XXXIX, pp. 449 ff.; Litzmann in *Werke*, Vol. X, pp. 387 ff.; Baechtold, *Goethes Iphigenie auf Tauris in vierfacher Gestalt*, 1883, and Reckling, *Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris nach den vier überlieferten Fassungen*, 1884. For a comparative study of the various versions Baechtold's edition is very convenient and practical.

† Cf. letter to Frau von Stein of April 17, 1781, and his diary of Aug. 4 and 19, 1781.

‡ Cf. his letter to Lavater of Nov. 26, 1781, and to F. H. Jacobi of Nov. 17, 1782.

it made for his friends, but still felt that it was not ready for publication. It seems he feared that it might be printed against his will,* and so, to forestall the danger of an unauthorized edition of this and other works,† he arranged in 1786 with Georg Joachim Goeschen of Leipzig for the publication of his collected works, in which the *Iphigenie* was to appear as the third volume.‡

For the purpose of this edition the poet undertook a new and final revision of the drama, and after much reflection definitely decided to give it metrical form. The brilliant example of Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* (1779), the first great German drama written in blank verse, the hearty encouragement of Wieland, and, above all, his own poetic instinct determined him in this decision.§ In the discussion of the various aspects of the drama he received much stimulus from Herder, whose keen metrical sense must have been especially helpful to the poet. After much deliberation the prose version C was put in the summer of 1786 into irregular iambic metre.

* Cf. his letter to Kestner of March 15, 1783.

† Without Goethe's knowledge a few scenes of version B were published by Lavater's amanuensis, J. M. Armbruster, in 1785 in the *Schwäbisches Museum*. These scenes were again copied from the *Museum* and published in the *Ephemeriden der Litteratur und des Theaters* of 1786. Cf. Baechtold, p. vi.

‡ Cf. Goethe's letter to F. I. Bertruch and Georg Joachim Goeschen of the end of June, 1786.

§ Goethe in his *Italienische Reise* of Jan. 10, 1787, expresses himself on the difficulties involved in choosing the metrical form as follows: 'The true cause why I for many years preferred prose for my works was the very great uncertainty in which our prosody fluctuates, in consequence of which many of my judicious and learned friends who cooperated with me left the decision of many questions to taste, a course, however, which was lacking in all standards.'

This metrical transcription Goethe took with him to Karlsbad, to subject it there to a thorough revision.* On Aug. 23, 1786, he wrote to Frau v. Stein from Karlsbad: 'Divided into verses as it now is, it gives me new pleasure. One can also see much better what improvements are still needed.' With the help of Herder, who was then also in Karlsbad, the work at first progressed rapidly, so that he expected to finish it in a few days. He devoted his chief attention to metrical improvements, and with this end in view took up the study of the *Electra* of Sophocles. Then he found that in comparison with the finished metre of the Greek drama his own verse was still 'rough, unmelodious, and unreadable'. † Finally he realized that the difficulties were much greater than he had expected, and so he abandoned the idea of finishing the *Iphigenie* in Karlsbad and took it with him to Italy.

THE WORK ON IPHIGENIE IN ITALY.

On Sept. 3, 1786, Goethe secretly left Karlsbad for Italy, a land which for many years he passionately longed to see. This Italian journey is, in its far-reaching effects upon his life and poetry, the most important event in his career. It rejuvenated, enlightened, and inspired him, and gave a definite direction to his aims and ideals. In Italy he lived for the first time in full æsthetic freedom. His essentially Hellenic nature, long repressed by his uncongenial duties and anxious introspections in Weimar, was liberated here, and asserted itself in its full strength when brought in contact with the beauty, freedom and naturalness of Italian life. Here he acquired classic

* The nature of this second metrical form is unknown, as no copy of it has been preserved.

† Cf. his letter to Herder of the end of Aug. 1786.

serenity. The greatest stimulus came to him from the large world of art about him. He says: 'In Italy I gradually felt myself freed from petty conceptions and removed from false wishes, and in place of the longing for the land of the fine arts, there arose in me a longing for art itself; I had beheld it, and now I wished to penetrate it.' * The principles of art which he derived from the direct contemplation of great masterpieces he endeavored to apply to his own works. For in Italy he became convinced that Nature had intended him for poetry, and he then resolved to achieve in it higher results than any he had yet attained. His renewed consciousness of strength as a poet gave him a sense of satisfaction in his poëtical labors in Italy which he had rarely felt before.

Returning now to the *Iphigenie* we find that during the first months of his Italian journey that work was his almost constant companion. He was determined to complete it before undertaking anything else. In the *Italienische Reise* of Jan. 6, 1787, he summarizes his work upon the drama in Italy as follows: 'When I had left behind me the Brenner, I took out the work from the largest package. . . . At the Lago di Garda, while the strong south wind was driving the waves on the beach, and where I was at least as much alone as my heroine on the coast of Tauris, I drew the first outlines of the new version, which I afterward continued in Verona, Vicenza, Padua, but most diligently in Venice. After this, however, the work came to a standstill, indeed I was led to a new design, viz. of writing an Iphigenia in Delphi, which I should have immediately carried into execution, if distraction and a feeling of duty toward the older piece had not kept me from it. In Rome, however, the work con-

* *Campagne in Frankreich, Werke,* Vol. XXXIII, p. 188. *Cf. also his letter to* Frau v. Stein of Dec. 29, 1786.

tinued with tolerable steadiness. In the evening as I went to sleep, I prepared myself for the morning's task, which I took up immediately upon awaking. My procedure was quite simple. I calmly copied the piece and tried the metre regularly, line by line and period by period.' From his letters it is evident that the form of the drama engaged his chief attention. On Oct. 14, 1786, he writes to Herder: 'The passages that were most finished trouble me most. I should like to bend their tender heads under the yoke of the verse without breaking their necks, and yet it is remarkable that generally a better expression comes with the metre.' * In Bologna he sees a picture of St. Agatha, which was attributed to Raphael but which has since disappeared, and in his *Italienische Reise* (Oct. 19) he describes its impression upon him as follows: 'The artist has given to her (St. Agatha) a sound self-possessed maidenhood, but yet without coldness and rudeness. I have noted the form well and shall mentally read to her my Iphigenia, and shall not allow my heroine to express anything which this saint might not utter.'

Thus it appears that in Italy under various influences, largely artistic, he gave the finishing touches to the *Iphigenie*. Indeed, it was only after the drama had become disengaged from its Weimar associations that the poet could work upon it with the full freedom of an artist. So in Rome he carefully removed everything from the drama which would directly suggest personal experiences. Everything was raised to the height of the typical, of the universally human. In Rome antiquity surrounded him like a second higher nature, and so the classical elements, which were subdued in the earlier versions, were given greater prominence. In his metrical

* Cf. here Schiller's utterance on the nature of metre in his letter *to Goethe* of Nov. 24, 1797.

difficulties he received considerable help from K. Ph. Moritz (1757–1793), whom he met in Rome. 'I should never have dared,' says Goethe, 'to translate *Iphigenie* into iambics, had not the prosody of Moritz appeared to me like a guiding star.* . . . It is singular that we find in our language but few syllables which are decidedly long or short. With the others one proceeds according to taste or caprice. Now Moritz after much thought has managed to find out that there is a certain order of rank among syllables, and that a syllable more important in sense is long as compared with the less significant, which is thereby made short; but on the other hand, the former in turn becomes short whenever it comes into the neighborhood of another which has more mental weight. . . . I have frequently consulted these principles and found them in agreement with my feelings.' † Thus aided by Moritz, but probably trusting more his own metrical sense, he considered most carefully every expression and verse, revising them wherever necessary. On Dec. 29, 1786, the laborious task was done, and on Jan. 13, 1787, he sent a copy of the manuscript to Weimar.‡ In his *Italienische Reise* of Jan. 10, 1787, he calls his drama his „Schmerzenskind", and adds that the *Iphigenie* deserved this designation in more senses than one. He still was dissatisfied with the metrical form of a number of lines, which he marked and gave Herder full power and authority

* His work on prosody appeared in 1786 entitled: *Versuch einer deutschen Prosodie.*

† *Italienische Reise* of Jan. 10, 1787. Cf. also Albert Koch, *Über den Versbau in Goethes Iphigenie,* Stettin, 1900.

‡ Cf. here his letters to Herder of Dec. 29, 1786, and of Jan. 13, 1787. For the description and history of Goethe's own manuscript, which is preserved in the Goethe archive in Weimar, cf. *Werke* X, pp. 389–390.

to correct. He wished especially that the euphony of several passages should be improved by Herder, but it has been impossible to determine just what alterations, if any, were introduced by him. The drama appeared in the summer of 1787 in the third volume of Goethe's collected works published by Goeschen.*

A comparison of the first prose version of 1779 (A) with the final metrical form of the drama shows that the changes made were almost wholly stylistic and metrical, consisting, as Lewes says, of 'just the sort of touches which elevate poetry above prose'. The original organization of the drama, the plot, the conception of the characters remained practically unchanged. A comparison of the four versions affords us therefore a fine insight into the development of Goethe's style and metrical sense between the years 1779 and 1787.† In general it may be said that the final version shows throughout a greater plasticity, terseness, and correctness of expression.

Unpleasant repetitions, unnecessary words, and even sentences are often cut out, and the obscurities of the earlier versions are removed by felicitous additions of word or phrase and by a fuller development of metaphor. Thus a greater roundness of expression and a larger epic breadth distinguish many passages of the final version. It is interesting to observe with what care and skill the prosaic expressions are modified and raised to the dignity of poetry. The poet aims at greater concreteness, and his imagination frequently transforms colorless abstractions into new and noble mythological creations.

* In the edition of Baechtold text D.

† A thorough comparison of the four versions has been made by Reckling, *Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris nach den vier überlieferten Fassungen*, 1884.

Many changes in the final version are due solely to metrical considerations. Single words and shorter sentences are frequently left out, and apocope, syncope, and elision are made use of for metrical reasons. On the other hand, words, phrases, and short sentences are occasionally added and the word-order is changed for the sake of the metre. With few exceptions these metrical alterations have given a greater distinction and perspicuity of thought to the drama, so that the work in its final form has been universally admired as one of the purest and most perfect productions in modern literature.

RECEPTION OF THE DRAMA.

THE appearance of *Iphigenie* was received by Goethe's friends in Rome and Germany with surprising coolness. With the exception of *Nathan der Weise*, a work so lofty in thought and so perfect in execution had not yet appeared in Germany. The æsthetic judgment of the people was not yet sufficiently developed to appreciate at once its exquisite beauty. Besides, something quite different was expected of Goethe. In 1787 he was known to the public largely as the author of *Götz* and *Werther*; hence something revolutionary, passionate, stormy, especially something thoroughly German in thought and form was expected of him. Schiller's early dramas were then the sensation of the German stage. Their bold attacks on the existing social order, their mighty pathos, their extravagant rhetoric, and their passionate action powerfully stirred the German public. What a contrast between these dramas, in *which we feel* the feverish pulsations of the approaching *revolution, and* Goethe's *Iphigenie* with its antique

theme and calm classic form! Goethe's famous lines in *Faust* well apply to his *Iphigenie*:

„Oft wenn es erst durch Jahre durchgedrungen
Erscheint es in vollendeter Gestalt.
Was glänzt ist für den Augenblick geboren;
Das Echte bleibt der Nachwelt unverloren." *

Even Goethe's intimate friends in Weimar did not receive the drama with much enthusiasm. They preferred it in its old familiar form with its tender associations, and felt the elimination of its personal elements to be rather a weakness than an improvement. Few realized what changes had taken place in the poet's character and artistic ideals in Italy. He felt that he was misunderstood and had disappointed the expectations of his friends, and yet this did not alter his convictions, for he applied the same artistic standards to the revision of his *Tasso*, which was undertaken soon after the completion of the *Iphigenie*. Upon his return from Italy in June, 1788, he became estranged from Frau von Stein, and unwilling to revive the many personal recollections he had interwoven in the drama, he made no effort to have it produced on the stage. Besides, its metrical form would have interfered at that time with a successful stage-representation. The German public was then unaccustomed to the use of metre in the drama, and even in 1798–9 the Weimar actors had to be carefully trained by Goethe and Schiller in the natural delivery of the verse of the Wallenstein drama.

* *Faust* I, ll. 70–74.

SCHILLER'S CRITICISM AND REVISION OF THE DRAMA.

Of the many contemporary reviews of the drama those of Wieland and Schiller are most interesting and suggestive.* Wieland reviewed it in his *Teutscher Merkur* in September, 1787, and regarded it as 'written just as much in the spirit of Sophocles as *Götz* was in the spirit of Shakespeare, an antique Greek play even to the point of illusion.' Schiller, who was then studying Goethe's works with much interest and care, reviewed *Egmont* in 1788 and *Iphigenie* in 1789. His judgment on *Iphigenie* was then very similar to that of Wieland. He wrote: 'Here we find him vying with as much and even greater success with the Greek tragic poets than he had done in his *Götz von Berlichingen* with Shakespeare. In the Greek form, of which he has become complete master, . . . he develops here the whole creative strength of his spirit, and excels his models in their own manner. We cannot read this play without feeling inspired by a certain spirit of antiquity, which is much too true and vivid for a mere imitation, even though it be most successful.'†

He changed, however, his judgment a few years later. In 1794 his memorable friendship with Goethe began. Though their natures were radically different, they soon discovered that their ultimate aims as men and

* Cf. also J. W. Braun, *Goethe im Urtheile seiner Zeitgenossen*, 1884. Vol. II, in various places.

† Schiller, *Werke*, (Goedeke Ed.), Vol. VI, p. 240. Also A. W. Schlegel called it 'an echo' of Greek tragedy. Cf. *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Litteratur*, Vol. II, p. 417.

poets were the same, and with unparalleled unselfishness each strove to understand and stimulate the best efforts of the other. One of their important aims was to raise the standards and increase the repertoire of the Weimar theatre. Schiller, who had displayed great talent in revising plays, undertook with Goethe's consent to revise also *Iphigenie* for stage purposes.* The plan of revision was first mentioned by Schiller in 1800, and the work was seriously undertaken in January, 1802. This task led Schiller to a thorough study and analysis of the drama, with the result that we have several letters of his to Körner and Goethe which contain some of the most suggestive criticisms we have on the work. Naturally enough his attitude toward *Iphigenie* in these letters is essentially different from that of his review in 1789, for he had meanwhile become thoroughly acquainted with Greek tragedy, had studied profoundly the dramaturgic art, and had developed into the greatest dramatist of Germany. On Jan. 21, 1802, he wrote as follows to his friend Körner about the drama: 'We wish to produce here next month Goethe's *Iphigenie*; this has given me occasion to read it again carefully, because Goethe feels the need of changing a few things in it. I was much surprised that it no longer made the same favorable impression upon me as formerly, although it will ever remain a soulful creation. It is, however, so *astonishingly modern and non-Greek* that one cannot understand how it was possible ever to compare it with a Greek play. It is wholly and purely moral, but the sensuous power, the life, the movement, and everything which specifically belongs to a true dramatic work is greatly lacking. . . . However, the work was a real meteor at the time

* He revised in 1796 Goethe's *Egmont*, and in 1801 Lessing's *Nathan der Weise*.

it arose . . . and the age cannot even now overlook it.' * Equally important is his letter to Goethe of Jan. 22, 1802, which contains several trenchant criticisms on the dramaturgic limitations of the play. Schiller considers here the drama from the point of view of a practical playwright who thoroughly understands what is necessary for an effective stage play.

Unfortunately Schiller's revision of the drama has not been preserved, but from his letters we may infer that he reduced somewhat the Orestes scenes and the long reflective passages, and tried to give greater prominence to the main action of the play, which in his judgment lagged in the second and third acts.† Schiller's version was produced for the first time in Weimar on May 15, 1802. Goethe came for the night from Jena to see the performance, expecting a peculiarly strange sensation from the representation of a drama which portrayed a mental state he had long since outgrown.‡ The drama was also produced in Berlin in Dec. 1802 and repeated there soon afterward, but without arousing much interest.§ Goethe did not witness another performance of his drama. When it was represented in Weimar in 1827 with the Berlin actor Krüger as Orestes, Goethe did not go to see it, fearing that an imperfect performance might prove painful. However, Krüger's representation was unusually intelligent and successful, and was described the next day to Goethe by Eckermann.‖ The delighted

* Cf. also Goethe's letter to Schiller of Jan. 19, 1802, in which he says of his *Iphigenie*: „Es ist ganz verteufelt human."

† Cf. note to ll. 1365 ff.

‡ Cf. Goethe's letter to Schiller of May 11, 1802.

§ Cf. Braun, *Goethe im Urtheile seiner Zeitgenossen*, Vol. III, pp. 5 and 25.

‖ Cf. *Eckermann's Gespräche mit Goethe*, April 1, 1827.

and grateful poet sent then to the actor a beautifully bound copy of his work, upon the fly-leaf of which he wrote the following famous lines which are of the greatest importance for the interpretation of the drama:

„Was der Dichter diesem Bande
Glaubend, hoffend anvertraut,
Werd' im Kreise deutscher Lande
Durch des Künstlers Wirken laut!

So im Handeln, so im Sprechen
Liebevoll verkünd' es weit:
Alle menschliche Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit."

Goethe's *Iphigenie* cannot be regarded as an effective stage-play. It is too limited in incident and action to become popular with the masses; it is essentially a „Seelendrama", which will ever strongly appeal to a cultivated audience, able to appreciate its noble diction, its perfect form, and the depth and delicacy of its motives and sentiments. To-day the drama is represented from time to time upon the best stages of Germany, which thus aim to keep alive the high ideals of German classicism. The task is, however, not an easy one, for neither the heroic nor the youthfully sentimental style of acting will do justice to Goethe's heroine. It is but rarely that an actress can be found who succeeds in combining the classic calmness and nobility of action with the deep warmth of expression required of the rôle of Iphigenia.

The drama has been translated into practically all the European tongues. Among the English translations that of William Taylor of Norwich, the foremost student of Goethe before Carlyle, is especially noteworthy. It

appeared in 1793 and was commended by both Goethe and Schiller. It is regarded as Taylor's best translation of a German classic. The most widely used English translation to-day is that of Miss Anna Swanwick, which is on the whole quite faithful to the orignal.—In 1818 the poet was much pleased by the appearance of a translation of his drama into modern Greek by Joannes Papadopulos, a young Greek who had studied in Jena. In 1861 it was translated into ancient Greek by Th. Kock.—Madame de Staël in her famous work *De l'Allemagne* (1813) wrote in most enthusiastic terms of Goethe's drama, and ever since it has met with special favor in France, partly because of its form, which agrees with the best principles of French classicism, and partly because of the popularity of the Orestes and Iphigenia themes in France.* Several translations have appeared in Italy, the best of which is that of Andrea Maffei. The Russian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, and Spanish translations, while showing the extent of the appreciation of Goethe's work, are not especially noteworthy.

* Cf. Intr. pp. xxxvi–xxxviii.

CRITICAL DISCUSSION.

THE HEALING OF ORESTES.

THE aim of the action of Goethe's drama is the return of Orestes and Iphigenia from Tauris to Mycenæ, where Orestes is, with the aid of his sister, to be reestablished upon the throne of his ancestors. This end can be attained only after Orestes has been freed from the torments of the Furies, who have been pursuing him ever since he murdered his mother. In obedience to the oracle of Apollo the unfortunate youth goes to Tauris, where an image of Artemis is worshipped in the temple, and is promised release from the Furies if he brings the sister back to Greece. Naturally he interprets the words of the oracle to refer to the image of the goddess, and proceeds with his friend Pylades to Tauris to execute the mission and obtain the promised relief. Upon their arrival in Tauris they are captured and, according to the law of the land, brought to the priestess to be sacrificed by her at the altar of the goddess. In the priestess Orestes finds his sister Iphigenia. He suffers again in her presence all the agonies of a tortured conscience; exhausted he falls into a swoon in which he sees beautiful visions of harmony and peace; finally roused by Pylades, he awakes and feels himself freed from the torments of the Furies and stirred by a new spirit of hope and courageous activity. Though he has not captured the image of the goddess, he is convinced that he is healed, and gratefully acknowledges that he owes his restoration to his

sister. The third act in which this remarkable spiritual change is wrought in Orestes the poet justly calls 'the axis of the play'. It represents the most important event in the drama upon which the whole action depends. Here the great purpose for which Orestes went to Tauris is attained, effected not by a deed of extraordinary daring, but by the influence of pure and noble womanhood.

It is not surprising, then, that the attention of critics has been chiefly devoted, especially in recent years, to the thorough analysis of this act. Efforts have been made to determine as clearly as possible the process by which the mental restoration of Orestes is effected. Some, after a searching analysis of the act, have found the change in Orestes unthinkable, contrary to all experience, and have pronounced it a psychological impossibility, a miracle which unmistakably points to the Greek mythological source of the drama.* Others, again, have discovered in the restoration of Orestes the specifically religious, Christian element of the drama, and have interpreted it as due to the action of 'divine grace'. † These Christian interpretations vary in a number of details, but all find something miraculous in the change of Orestes, and ascribe it to the intervention of mysterious divine forces. Another class of critics refuse to see anything miraculous or mystical in the drama, reject all dogmatic Christian interpretations as untenable in view of Goethe's well-known opposition to dogmatic religion, and find the healing of Orestes well motivated and based upon deep personal experiences of the poet.

* Cf. Franz Kern, *Deutsche Dramen als Schullektüre*, 1886. Kern's criticism has been especially fruitful in arousing a general discussion of the subject.

† So Müller, Matthias, Frick, Evers, Heinzelmann and others.

In the opinion of the editor it is only the latter attitude that can be justified, if we keep in mind what we know of Goethe's character and his artistic purposes.

Few will maintain that the healing of Orestes is a religious miracle in the ordinary sense of that term. Such a miracle would after all be nothing else than a *deus ex machina*, which is rejected to-day by all critics as undramatic. Lessing says about the intervention of the miraculous in the drama: 'Much as we may be convinced of the immediate effects of Grace, nevertheless they cannot please us upon the stage, where everything which belongs to the characters of the persons must arise from the most natural causes.' * And similarly Goethe says: 'Belief and unbelief are by no means the organs with which a work of art is to be apprehended. Rather are quite different human powers and capacities necessary for it. . . . A religious theme, however, may be a good subject for art, but only in so far as it possesses general human interest.' †

Goethe is preeminently the poet of the human. What Schiller especially admired in his poetry was his faithful representation of the typical truths of human experience.‡ The fundamental law of poetry, according to Goethe, is that everything proceed in it with the necessity and truth of nature. Empirical psychology is to him the real domain of poetry.§ Speaking of the first four volumes of his collected works which appeared in 1787, he says: 'I can truly say that there is not one letter in them which has not been lived, felt, enjoyed, suffered, thought.' § In view of all this it is

* *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, No. 2.

† *Eckermann's Gespräche* of May 2, 1824.

‡ Cf. Schiller's letter to Goethe of March 1, 1795.

§ Cf. his letter to Schiller of Nov. 25, 1797.

clear that the only safe basis of interpretation of Goethe's works is the experience from which they proceeded. Goethe can and should be interpreted through himself. And so we shall find that the fundamental ideas of the third act of the *Iphigenie* are rooted in characteristic spiritual experiences of the poet.

A glance at Goethe's religious and moral convictions will help us to understand his conception of the influence which a noble person of a highly spiritual nature may exert upon his environment. Goethe was a man of a profound religious nature of a non-ecclesiastical order. He never pretended to be an orthodox Christian, and in fact maintained throughout his life a skeptical attitude toward all forms of dogmatic religion. It is therefore doing violence to his writings to try to interpret them from the point of view of any distinct religious dogma. He called himself a Protestant, and as such claimed 'the right of holding his inner being free from all prescribed dogma, the right of developing himself religiously.' Although in the course of his life his religious views underwent considerable change, it may be said that the general trend of his thought was toward the philosophy of Spinoza. Goethe is a poetical pantheist; the whole universe is to him divine; God is immanent in all things and beings. Accordingly, throughout life he strove to study God in his endless manifestations.† 'I believe in God,' he once says, 'is a beautiful and praiseworthy phrase; but to recognize God in all His manifestations, that is true holiness on earth.'‡

The moral expression of the Divine Goethe finds in

* *Italienische Reise* of Sept. 22, 1787.

† Cf. *Eckermann's Gespräche* of Feb. 28, 1831, and of Aug. 2, 1830; also Riemer, *Mittheilungen über Goethe*, I, 118.

‡ *Maximen und Reflexionen*, vii.

love. He says: 'That is what I call the omnipresence of God, who has everywhere spread and implanted a portion of his endless love, and has intimated even in the brute as a germ that which blossoms to perfection in man.' * This moral force is not a product of reflection, but innate, active in its nature, devoted to the service of objects outside of itself. Man who follows this inborn impulse becomes 'noble, helpful, and good'; the more he is filled with it, the more he approaches the Divine. The consciousness of this moral force in one's self and the contemplation of its endless manifestations in human society are more important to Goethe than all religious dogmas and traditions.† It is interesting to note how often he judges people with reference to this central moral principle. Those in whom this principle is most potent are distinguished by their simplicity, sincerity, open-heartedness and benevolence. It is Goethe's conviction that such people have the power of awakening a deep moral life in others, or, as he once says to Eckermann, 'love engenders love' (Liebe erzeugt Liebe).‡ Accordingly, all the qualities emanating from love: truth, candor, sympathy, are active forces capable of arousing similar qualities in others. A harmonious moral life expresses itself in nobility and calmness of soul and will exert a soothing, quieting influence upon agitated beings.

Goethe had a large experience with persons of strong moral natures. Often he felt that an irresistible force proceeded from such persons, which in some inexplicable way stirred his moral life to its very depths. He reflected much upon these mysterious forces dwelling in nature and in the moral life of man, and described them

* *Eckermann's Gespräche* of Oct. 8, 1827.

† Cf. Goethe's letter to Jacobi of May 5, 1786.

‡ *Eckermann's Gespräche* of Oct. 23, 1828.

at length in his autobiography and in his conversations with Eckermann. The extraordinary influence which men of very strong personality often exercised upon their environment he ascribed to the 'demoniacal' element (das Dämonische) in them.* 'A tremendous energy,' he says, 'emanates from them, and they exercise an incredible power over all creatures.'† This power he found in a preeminent degree in Napoleon, Frederick the Great, Peter the Great, Byron, Paganini, in Duke Karl August, and in many others. According to the accounts of his contemporaries the poet himself was so endowed. Speaking of the personality of Karl August to Eckermann Goethe said: 'In the deceased grand-duke it (das Dämonische) existed to such a degree that no one was able to withstand him. He exercised an attraction upon men through his calm presence without his needing even to show himself kind and friendly.'‡

But not only did Goethe feel the influence of men of extraordinary personality; he was also very sensitive to the atmosphere of people of more moderate attainments, who revealed in their actions sound and clear moral instincts, who were direct, open, sympathetic, and aroused his confidence. In his letters he frequently describes such natures and the wholesome effect they had upon him. But he was especially susceptible to the influence of noble women. His numerous feminine friendships form one of the most interesting and characteristic chapters of his life. No poet has ever portrayed with such power and beauty the uplifting and soothing influence of noble womanhood as Goethe. A distinctive feature of his

* *Eckermann's Gespräche* of Feb. 28 and Mar. 2, 1831.

† Cf. *Werke*, Vol. XXIX, p. 177.

‡ *Cf. Eckermann's Gespräche* of March 8, 1831.

relation to women was his desire to confess to them all that agitated and burdened his heart and mind, and such confessions afforded him the greatest relief. We can mention here only a few of these friendships and their effect upon the poet.

In Leipzig he became acquainted with Frau Böhme, an elderly lady in delicate health, who lived in quiet retirement. She attracted the young student and won his confidence and affection through her gentle tender nature and her real sympathetic concern for his well-being. More strongly he felt the effect of the personality of Friederike Oeser, daughter of the artist. In his poetic epistle to her of Nov. 6, 1768, he confesses that he knows no one who can so well soothe his pain and with a glance restore the calmness of his soul. And in a letter to her of Feb. 13, 1769, he writes that in her presence he experienced the joyousness and heroism of her soul, for 'those qualities are as communicable as electricity, and you have as much of it as there are sparks in an electric machine.'

Upon his return to Frankfurt he came under the influence of Fräulein von Klettenberg, in whom he found traits of character which he always regarded as the most valuable: 'a hearty, natural conduct, cheerfulness and calmness of soul.' In Friederike Brion and Charlotte Buff it was the naturalness, kindliness, and truth of their being that so powerfully attracted him. We have already referred to the calming influence of the letters of Countess Auguste von Stolberg, especially those written in 1775, the year of his greatest mental agitation produced by his relation to Lili. He feels impelled to confess to her all his inner conflicts, and the language he uses in describing to her the deep sense of his guilt and the *chaotic* state of his feelings reminds us of the

confessions of Orestes in the third act of the *Iphigenie*. He feels that a look of her eye, a pressure of her hand, a comforting word from her lips would afford him the greatest relief. Once he exclaims: 'Dear child, I have always a feeling that you will save me from deep misery. No other feminine creature can do it but you.'

His relation to Auguste von Stolberg prepared him for his friendship for Frau von Stein, which must be regarded as the central experience underlying the *Iphigenie*. Again and again he confesses all that he owes to her friendship, and a number of his letters throw the strongest light upon the manner in which the restoration of Orestes is effected. He confesses that her friendship and love have caused a radical change in his whole moral being, but adds that the process is quite incomprehensible to him. He writes: 'I cannot say and dare not comprehend what a change your love is effecting in my innermost being; it is a condition which, old as I am, I do not yet know.' Again: 'Your relation to me is so holy and peculiar that I feel it cannot be expressed in words; human beings cannot see it.' He feels himself morally purified through her friendship. He says: 'I am on the way to being cured through your love of some remnants of sins and shortcomings.' 'I owe everything to you. I feel as if now no evil could any longer touch me.' In September, 1776, when the unhappy poet Lenz goes to Kochberg to visit Frau von Stein, Goethe writes to her: 'Lenz is to see you, and that broken soul is to sip the drops of balsam in your presence,' significant words, showing what effect he expects of the personality of his friend even upon a man who is on the verge of insanity. The moral qualities which she awakens in the poet are those which she herself preeminently possesses: truth, openness, above all calm-

ness of soul. To her more than to any other being he can reveal himself, to her he can confess all that burdens his heart. Such confessions afford him the greatest moral relief, as we find also in the case of Orestes. So he writes Dec. 4, 1780: 'After my confession of yesterday I feel very much better and easier; would that it may become complete!' Again he writes on March 27, 1781: 'May the openness and the calmness of my heart which you restored for me be yours, and may all the good that comes from it to others and to me be also yours. Believe me I feel myself quite different, my former benevolence returns, and with it the joy of my life; you have restored in me the delight in doing good which I had lost entirely.'

From these and other letters it appears that it was Goethe's conviction derived from experience that in some way incomprehensible to the discursive understanding one being may profoundly affect another through the sheer force of his personality, may awaken and develop dormant moral forces and bring harmony and peace to anxious souls. Goethe felt these moral forces most keenly when they proceeded from noble women. This feminine influence upon the emotional and moral development of man the poet treats repeatedly in his lyrics and larger works before and after the *Iphigenie*. In *Werther*, *Egmont*, *Tasso*, *Wilhelm Meister*, *Wahlverwandtschaften*, and *Faust* he portrays the various phases of this theme from the point of view of typical characters and situations. In the *Iphigenie* we have the intensest and most poetic expression of this experience. Just as the poet felt his whole being strengthened and restored to useful activity through the spiritual influence of Frau v. Stein, so he represented Orestes as healed through the influence of Iphigenia. The deep sympathy in which the unhappy

Orestes feels himself drawn to the unknown priestess, his free and full confession to her of his guilt, which he feels more keenly than ever before in her pure and holy presence, the frightful visions of his morbid fancy, his exhaustion and his consequent relief and peace—all this is a grand poetic representation of Goethe's own experience. It is psychologically as true as the experience from which it is drawn. But naturally Goethe does not offer any metaphysical explanation of the process by which the healing of Orestes is effected, for that is not the province of the poet. Goethe once says to Eckermann: 'The more incommensurable and the more incomprehensible to the understanding a poetic production is, so much the better it is.' * Moreover, Goethe frequently states that the influence of one personality upon another transcends human understanding; it is a typical human experience, our moral growth depends upon it, but it is inexplicable. The poet states the largest aspects of this same fundamental mystery of our life in the famous catechization scene in *Faust*, where Faust says to Gretchen (ll. 3446-56):

„Schau' ich nicht Aug' in Auge dir,
Und drängt nicht alles
Nach Haupt und Herzen dir,
Und webt in ewigem Geheimnis
Unsichtbar, sichtbar, neben dir?
Erfüll' davon dein Herz, so groß es ist,
Und wenn du ganz in dem Gefühle selig bist,
Nenn' es dann wie du willst,
Nenn's Glück! Herz! Liebe! Gott!
Ich habe keinen Namen
Dafür! Gefühl ist alles;

* *Eckermann's Gespräche* of May 6, 1827. Cf. also his *utterance on poetry* of March 8, 1831.

Name ist Schall und Rauch,
Umnebelnd Himmelsglut." *

This poetic pantheism is, as has been said, the faith toward which Goethe leaned, and if we would interpret the influence of Iphigenia upon Orestes from this point of view, we might ascribe it to God, but in no other sense than that all life and experience, physical and spiritual, are to be ascribed to the same source. We have, therefore, here no miracle in the ordinary sense, no special interposition of God in behalf of Orestes. Goethe had no distinct religious tradition or dogma in mind when he wrote the drama, but endeavored to give a concentrated poetic expression to an experience which he had often felt, especially in the first years of his residence in Weimar, and in which he saw a typical significance. The process by which one person may exert the greatest influence upon another, even to the point of restoring a being torn by remorse and despair to joyful activity, the poet did not try to analyze and explain, for he regarded it as beyond human comprehension. He therefore limited himself to the faithful representation of the action and reaction of the moral forces in man, which he believed were implanted in him by God. Iphigenia says to Thoas (l. 494):

„Sie (die Götter) reden nur durch unser Herz zu uns."

Let us now turn to the drama and see how Goethe conceived the character of Iphigenia and how he represented the influence of her personality upon her brother Orestes. The circumstance of the legend that Iphigenia was a sister of Orestes was most significant to the poet,

* Cf. also his letter to Auguste v. Stolberg of Jan. 26, 1775.

for he regarded sisterly love as the purest and most unselfish. He entertained the deepest love for his sister Cornelia; in his boyhood and early youth she was his closest friend and confidant. After her marriage in 1773 he longed for a similar relationship to other women and thought he had found it in Auguste von Stolberg, whom in his letters he frequently calls his sister.* Later he similarly addressed Frau von Stein in the exalted moments of his friendship.† And so it is through the pure love of the sister Iphigenia that Orestes is to be restored.

Orestes and Iphigenia belong to a family of great criminals. Ever since their great ancestor Tantalus was hurled to Tartarus for his overweening pride, the hatred of the gods is supposed to have pursued the family and to have involved its various members from generation to generation in monstrous crimes. Iphigenia is the only guiltless member of her race. It is a miracle to Thoas that she escaped the traditional fate of her family. It happened through the intervention of the goddess who rescued her in her early youth from the sacrifice in Aulis and brought her to Tauris to serve there as the priestess of her temple. In the Taurian land, far removed from the unbridled passions of her kindred, she developed into pure and noble womanhood. Guided by her own great experience in Aulis, she arrived at new views concerning the nature of the gods and their relations to men, views directly opposed to the gloomy beliefs of her family. She came to the conviction that the gods were true, just, and beneficent, that they loved and conferred blessings upon the race

* Cf. his letters to her of Jan. 26, March 25, April 25, and July 25, 1775.

† Cf. his letters of [illegible] 23, April 14, and May 24, 1776.

of men, and required that man live in obedience to their laws. She says to Thoas (ll. 1825–8):

> „Von Jugend auf hab' ich gelernt gehorchen,
> Erst meinen Eltern und dann einer Gottheit
> Und folgsam fühlt' ich immer meine Seele
> Am schönsten frei."

Naturally she regarded the ancient custom of the Taurians of sacrificing strangers at the altar of Diana as based upon an utter misconception of the nature of the gods, as in the highest degree sinful.

> „Der mißversteht die Himmlischen, der sie
> Blutgierig wähnt; er dichtet ihnen nur
> Die eignen grausamen Begierden an." (ll. 523–5.)

She concealed her birth and the history of her past life from all, and yet, though a stranger in Tauris, the influence of her personality was soon felt by the king and the people. She imparted her religious and moral principles to the barbarians and by her gentle eloquence succeeded in discontinuing the human sacrifices. The introduction of the higher laws of humanity through her influence proved a blessing to the land, alleviated the condition of the people, and established the strongest moral bond between them and the revered priestess.

> „Und fühlt nicht jeglicher ein besser Los,
> Seitdem der König, der uns weis' und tapfer
> So lang' geführet, nun sich auch der Milde
> In deiner Gegenwart erfreut und uns
> Des schweigenden Gehorsams Pflicht erleichtert?
> Das nennst du unnütz, wenn von deinem Wesen
> Auf Tausende herab ein Balsam träufelt?" (ll. 133–9.)

She deeply sympathized with and comforted the king when he lost his last and most beloved son in battle, and through this personal relation won his largest con-

fidence. Thus the poet has represented Iphigenia as the center of the moral regeneration of a young and vigorous people, eager for growth but needing spiritual guidance.

> „Denn nirgends baut die Milde, die herab
> In menschlicher Gestalt vom Himmel kommt,
> Ein Reich sich schneller, als wo trüb und wild
> Ein neues Volk, voll Leben, Mut und Kraft,
> Sich selbst und banger Ahnung überlassen,
> Des Menschenlebens schwere Bürden trägt." (ll. 1677–82.)

In all this great humanizing work she followed the instincts of her pure and harmonious nature, for Iphigenia, like so many of Goethe's finest feminine characters, is essentially naïve. In her religious and moral life she implicitly trusts her intuitions.

> „Ich untersuche nicht, ich fühle nur." (l. 1650.)

Such are a few of the salient traits of her character. She is in the highest sense of the term a priestess among the Scythians, but though revered by all she cannot overcome a feeling of strangeness in Tauris. She is a Greek and loves Hellas; her feelings are bound up with her family, and she longs to return some day to her native land and purify her family through her moral and religious ideals. In obedience to the instincts of her heart, and believing that the final mission of her life is not in Tauris, but in Mycenæ, she rejects the suit of Thoas. The disappointed and angry king then commands that the practice of human sacrifices be at once resumed, a command which threatens to undo her long and beneficent work of civilization in Tauris. Then the captive Pylades is brought to her and from him she learns the crushing news of the murder of her father by her mother Clytæmnestra.

With forced composure she then receives Orestes. The deepest gloom envelops his soul. Horrible phantoms of his tortured conscience repeatedly rise before his excited fancy, bewilder him and drive him to despair. In this frame of mind no sound activity is possible, he is world-weary and would welcome death in expiation of his crime. His faithful friend Pylades vainly tried to encourage and calm him by turning his mind away from the scenes of murder to the beautiful days of their early youth when they dreamed glorious dreams of a useful heroic activity. But he did not feel the whole depth of his friend's suffering and did not appreciate the freeing power of a full confession. Optimistic and active himself, he hoped that activity would eventually restore the morbid spirit of his friend. But Orestes says (ll. 749–51):

> „Bin ich bestimmt zu leben und zu handeln
> So nehm' ein Gott von meiner schweren Stirn
> Den Schwindel weg."

This task is performed by Iphigenia. She approaches him with her natural sympathy, for she has heard from Pylades of his great mental sufferings, her hand touches his to loosen his fetters, her gentle words penetrate the gloom of his soul, and he feels at once the comforting influence of her pure personality. She seems to him 'a heavenly woman.' Her deep concern for the fate of the house of Agamemnon and her kindly consideration for him arouse his confidence, and he feels impelled to confess everything to her and finally to reveal his identity. Dissimulation, naturally repugnant to him, is impossible in her holy presence. Instinctively he feels that a stronger bond exists between them. In his confession he suffers anew and more intensely than ever before all the agonies

of a tortured conscience. His imagination sees again all the incidents of his crime with the distinctness of reality. The hideous forms of the relentless Furies rise before him and he hears their mocking laughter. He believes that he is irreparably doomed.

And how does Iphigenia receive his confession? She, who as the daughter of Clytæmnestra has the right to condemn the deed and avenge the murder, has only words of tenderest compassion for him. She knows that he committed the deed in the belief that it was his sacred duty, and forgives him. Repeatedly she tries to make him realize who she is, and endeavors by word and gesture to calm him. But all her attempts are vain and seem for a while but to augment his sufferings. Her gentle words of sympathy stir his innermost being, he evades her embrace. The horror of his deed stands so visibly before him that he cannot comprehend how the pure and saintly woman, the priestess, can have sympathy and love for him, the tainted criminal, the object of the revengeful pursuit of the Furies. And so in his frenzy he mistakes her tenderness for the wild ravings of a Bacchante. When he finally grasps the thought that the priestess who has been commanded to slay him is his sister, the horror of the situation drives him to the height of despair and almost unsettles his reason. But the poet believed that love awakened love and so, even on the verge of insanity, when his eyes fall upon his weeping sister, he utters the deeply pathetic words (ll. 1249–51):

„Weine nicht! Du hast nicht schuld.
Seit meinen ersten Jahren hab' ich nichts
Geliebt, wie ich dich lieben könnte, Schwester."

Exhausted he falls into a swoon. The confession, stimulated by the pure and sympathetic personality of *Iphigenia, has finally* given him the much needed relief.—

The poet had now the difficult task of representing in some convincing way the spiritual change in Orestes, and he did it by making him describe the visions of peace and reconciliation that float before his fancy. This very delicate and highly poetical scene may also be traced to Goethe's experiences. In his letters the poet often ascribes to sleep and beautiful dreams a beneficent effect upon his moral well-being. Especially is this the case during the period of his friendship with Frau von Stein. He frequently reports to her that a sound sleep had purified his soul, had caused the misery of a previous evening to vanish, and restored again the spiritual harmony of his nature.* On Feb. 23, 1776, he writes the following significant letter to her: 'What a gentle and light sleep I had, with what happiness I arose and greeted the beautiful sun, the first time in fourteen days with a free heart, and with how much gratitude toward you, angel of Heaven, to whom I owe all this!' Again on March 15, 1785, he writes: 'I have only two gods, you and sleep. You heal everything in me that can be healed.' So also in *Faust* the poet symbolically represents the recovery of his hero from his pangs of remorse over the tragic fate of Gretchen as effected by a long refreshing sleep, granted to him by the kindly fairies. When Faust awakes, he feels restored and prepared to enter again upon life's struggles.†

When Orestes begins to regain consciousness, he finds Iphigenia standing by his side and hears her fervid prayer to the goddess in which she expresses her deep love and concern for him and her hope of returning with

* Cf. his letters to Frau v. Stein of May 21, 1778; Feb. 14, 1779; Nov. 13, 1782; March 7, 1783; Nov. 23, 1783, and June 24, 1784.

† Cf. *Faust*, Pt. II, ll. 4613 ff.

him to Greece. Then the manly words of his friend, reminding him of the danger of the situation and exhorting him to proceed at once to action, dispel the last impressions of his vision. He awakes, feels that his soul is free, and turns with hope and courage to the duties of life. Though the image of the goddess has not been captured, the Furies have ceased to torment him. He knows that he owes this spiritual freedom to his sister. And so toward the end of the drama he says (ll. 2119–26):

„Von dir berührt,
War ich geheilt; in deinen Armen faßte
Das Übel mich mit allen seinen Klauen
Zum letztenmal und schüttelte das Mark
Entsetzlich mir zusammen; dann entfloh's
Wie eine Schlange zu der Höhle. Neu
Genieß' ich nun durch dich das weite Licht
Des Tages."

THE INNER CONFLICTS OF IPHIGENIA.

THE connection between Iphigenia's inner conflicts with the main action of the drama has been amply discussed in the notes. With Iphigenia, constituted as she is, these inner conflicts arise of necessity from the dramatic situation at the end of the third act. She wishes to save her brother and return with him to Greece, but this seems only possible by practicing deception upon the king. The instincts of her sisterly affection clash with the demands of the moral law. This moral law is to her not an external command, but an essential part of her being, a dictate of her conscience. Her religious and moral convictions are an expression of this inner voice, and thus far all her actions have been directed by it. The beneficent results of her conduct have

proved to her its validity and its holiness. Truthfulness to herself and to all with whom she has come in contact has thus far been the law of her life and has given strength and harmony to her whole being, and now the stress of circumstances seems to demand that, if she would save her brother, she act in violation of this principle. We have here the deepest of tragic conflicts, and the poet develops every phase of it with fulness and consistency. When finally, after the greatest inner struggles, she stakes everything upon the moral law, which is to her divine, we feel that she acts in full accordance with her character. The priestess Iphigenia could not have acted otherwise.

It has been pointed out that there is a striking analogy between the conduct of Iphigenia and that of Neoptolemus in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. Philoctetes was a friend of Hercules, who left him his bow and arrows before ascending the funeral-pyre on Mt. Œta. When the Trojan war broke out, Philoctetes joined the expedition, but was bitten by a noxious serpent on the island of Tenedos, where the fleet stopped on its way to Troy. Owing to the offensive smell of the wound and the cries he uttered in his agony, he was abandoned by the Greeks on the island of Lemnos and there left to his fate. Several years afterward Helenus, a Trojan seer, prophesied that Troy could not be taken without Philoctetes and the famous bow and arrows of Hercules. Accordingly Odysseus undertakes the task of bringing him to Troy, and for this purpose associates with him the youthful Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, who had no share in the abandonment of Philoctetes. The scene of the action takes place in Lemnos. Odysseus, being known to Philoctetes, keeps himself in the background, but directs Neoptolemus to entrap the man

on board his ship by ingenious lies. Neoptolemus at first strongly protests against lying, but finally consents to carry out the plans of Odysseus in the hope of thus ending the war and winning glory for himself. He then easily gains the confidence of Philoctetes and promises to take him back to his home. When they are about to embark, Philoctetes is overcome by a terrible spasm of pain from his incurable wound, and in his misery entrusts the bow and arrows to Neoptolemus, asking him to guard them from his foes during his sleep, which generally follows such attacks. When at last he falls into a deep slumber, the chorus advises Neoptolemus to carry off the weapons. But the sight of the agony of Philoctetes arouses the better nature of Neoptolemus; he is ashamed of the deception he has practiced, and when Philoctetes awakes and thanks him for his care, he confesses to him the truth that he is not his friend, but really a tool in the hands of his bitterest enemy, Odysseus. Afterwards, in spite of the protests and threats of Odysseus, Neoptolemus returns the bow to Philoctetes, and when he cannot induce him to go with him to Troy, he is ready to redeem his pledge and take him back to his home. As they are ready to depart, Hercules suddenly descends from the sky and commands Philoctetes to go to Troy and aid in the destruction of the city. Philoctetes obeys, and hastens with Neoptolemus to the ship.

The resemblance between the characters of Neoptolemus and Iphigenia is evident. Both are essentially noble open natures who in a critical moment are ready to jeopardize everything that is dear to them rather than practice deception. Neoptolemus says: 'For it is my nature to do nothing with evil treachery' (l. 88), and similarly Iphigenia says (ll. 1403–4):

„Ich habe nicht gelernt, zu hinterhalten,
Noch jemand etwas abzulisten."

Both are actuated by noble motives in practicing deception: Neoptolemus by the wish to help his countrymen to conquer Troy, Iphigenia by the hope of saving her brother and returning with him to Greece. Both have their rôles assigned to them by shrewd and worldly men, Neoptolemus by Odysseus, Iphigenia by Pylades, and both are to tell stories which contain elements of truth and falsehood. In trying to carry out their parts, both realize the full meaning of their contemplated treachery, Neoptolemus at the sight of the sufferings of Philoctetes, Iphigenia at the thought of her obligations to Thoas and his people. The purity and truth of both reassert themselves, and both reveal their stratagems to the very persons against whom they are directed, even at the risk of renouncing thereby what is dearest to them and incurring the greatest personal dangers. A careful comparison between the two dramas will also reveal a striking correspondence between the characters of Odysseus and Pylades.*

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE GREEK AND THE GERMAN IPHIGENIA.

A CAREFUL study of Goethe's *Iphigenie* shows that to some extent he was influenced by all the extant Greek dramas on the Orestes and Iphigenia themes, but especially by the *Iphigenia among the Taurians* of Euripides. Goethe derived from that drama not only the main action

* Cf. Ferdinand Schultz, *Die Nachbildung der Antike in Goethes Iphigenie. Preussische Jahrbücher*, Vol. XLVIII, pp. 260 ff.

of his play, viz. the return of Iphigenia to Greece and the release of Orestes from the Furies, but, as has been abundantly shown in the notes, also the language of Euripides and some of his motives, thoughts, and sentiments have directly influenced the German play. And yet the religious and moral ideals of the two dramas are as radically different as were the times in which they were written. The two dramas have been frequently compared, generally to the disparagement of Euripides. Enthusiastic admirers of Goethe have repeatedly contrasted the moral limitations of the Greek drama with the spiritual depth and purity of the German. Such criticisms are misleading and are eminently unjust to the Greek poet. It is to be remembered that a period of about twenty-two hundred years intervened between the two plays—a period during which the moral sense of Europe had developed under the influence of Christianity from the restricted national ideals of the Greeks to the large international ideals of humanity of the 18th century. A comparative study of both dramas is valuable only if undertaken in the historical spirit, from the point of view of the conditions that gave them birth and the ideals which they aimed to express. It will then be seen that each drama is an excellent expression of the highest spirit of the civilization of its own time and country.

Before entering upon such a comparison it is important to note that the modern stage places no restrictions upon the poet in the choice of his subject and the manner of its treatment. Whether the theme chosen be legendary or historical, the modern poet has assumed the right to subject it to such modifications as are required by his dramatic purposes. The ancient Greek dramatist was much more limited. As a rule he was restricted to the choice of such legendary themes as formed the basis of

the national religion,* with the result that the same stories were dramatized over and over again by successive poets. In fact it was through the drama that the Greek people were kept acquainted with their religion and their legendary history. And so the religious conservatism required that the main outlines of the sacred stories be closely adhered to by the dramatists; only the incidents of the legends, which often varied widely in the different districts, and the question of time, place, and motive, were left to the discretion of the poet and could be altered at will. Therefore the Greek dramatist, wishing to give some freshness and new interest to the well-known old legends, devoted all his ingenuity to the reconstruction of the plot.

Goethe, feeling free to use every phase of the old legend in his own way, remodeled it to suit his own poetical ends. The whole action of the drama was to be determined by the character of Iphigenia, and therefore all the deviations of the drama from Euripides can be explained from this central purpose of the poet. Goethe's aim was not to construct a new, ingenious, and theatrically effective plot, but to show the overpowering influence of pure womanhood upon her whole environment. Accordingly the general character of his drama had to be psychological, its chief interest had to be transferred from external action to the spiritual conflicts and changes of the principal characters.

The most important deviation of Goethe from Euripides we find in his new interpretation of the oracle of Apollo, by which the capture of the image of Diana and the final interposition of Pallas Athena were rendered unnecessary. Here we can best study the radical difference between

* During the whole fifth century B.C. only very few exceptions to this rule are recorded.

the old play and the new. For Euripides the removal of the image of Diana from Tauris to Attica was the most essential element of the old legend, with which important local religious traditions were bound up. At Halæ, near Athens, there was a temple of Artemis containing an image of the goddess, which was believed to have been captured from Tauris by Orestes and to which certain symbolical rites indicative of an early custom of human sacrifices were paid. There was also a well-known cult of Iphigenia in Brauron, where, according to tradition, she served after her return from Tauris as a priestess of Diana.* Euripides ingeniously connected the expiation of the crime of Orestes with the capture of the sacred statue through the help of Iphigenia and its transportation from Tauris to Halæ. He thus dramatized familiar events of the national and religious life of his countrymen, aiming to evoke thereby the local patriotism of the Athenians.—The appearance of Pallas Athena at the end of the play, and her intervention in behalf of the Greeks, are certainly undramatic, but may be justified on national and religious grounds. The poet wished thereby to give high religious sanction to the removal of the image, which would otherwise have been merely a deed of stratagem and theft. Moreover, he desired to introduce the prophecy concerning Attic institutions, well known to the Athenians, which, coming from the lips of their patron-goddess, was intended to arouse the religious awe of the spectators.† The aim to gratify local patriotic and religious sentiment was then the leading motive for the introduction of the much-discussed final scene in the drama of Euripides.

* Cf. pp. xxix–xxx.
† Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 1446 ff.

All these considerations of Euripides had little interest for Goethe. His dramatic purpose was not to explain the origin of the worship of the sacred image in Halæ or the cult of Iphigenia in Brauron, but chiefly to represent the moral effect which a pure woman may have upon a man suffering the torments of a guilty conscience. What need, then, had Goethe for the capture of a sacred image, if, according to his conviction, Orestes could be freed from the pursuit of the Furies through the influence of the pure personality of Iphigenia? The Greeks believed that it was possible for a matricide to be absolved from pollution through the performance of some acts of ritual atonement and purification. Pylades very well states the Greek point of view as follows (ll. 744–8):

„Zu einer schweren Tat beruft ein Gott
Den edeln Mann, der viel verbrach, und legt
Ihm auf, was uns unmöglich scheint, zu enden.
Es siegt der Held, und büßend dienet er
Den Göttern und der Welt, die ihn verehrt."

But such a view of purification is foreign to our moral and religious sense. We cannot see any causal connection between the capture of an ancient statue and the atonement of guilt. Such an atonement seems to us external, arbitrary, and superficial, whereas we demand an inner, spiritual change and purification. Accordingly, the central idea of Goethe's drama is based upon the modern view of atonement, which is possible only through inner repentance. The poet therefore so revised the words of the oracle that Orestes, after he had been healed through the influence of his sister, discovers at a critical moment that Apollo never intended the image to be removed from Tauris, and that the sister referred to in the oracle was none other than Iphigenia herself. Thus

all obstacles to the return of Iphigenia and Orestes are removed, and the purposes of Apollo are brought into harmony with Iphigenia's firm belief in the justice and the goodness of the gods.

Goethe's Iphigenia could not possibly take the attitude toward the barbarians which we find in the heroine of Euripides. The spirit of the Greek drama is thoroughly national. It glorifies Greek intellect and Greek civilization over the dullness and brutality of the barbarians of Scythia. The wily Greek woman feels no scruples about deceiving the unsophisticated foreign king, for the high moral obligations which the Greek felt toward his countrymen did not extend to the barbarians. The trickery by which the Greek Iphigenia beguiles the Taurian king doubtless strongly appealed to the national pride of the Greek audience. The actions of the German Iphigenia are determined by different ideals. Hers is the religion of humanity which, she believes, is implanted in all human beings. When Iphigenia confesses to Thoas the full truth, the Scythian king says (ll. 1936–9):

> „Du glaubst, es höre
> Der rohe Scythe, der Barbar, die Stimme
> Der Wahrheit und der Menschlichkeit, die Atreus,
> Der Grieche, nicht vernahm?"

To which the priestess answers:

> „Es hört sie jeder,
> Geboren unter jedem Himmel, dem
> Des Lebens Quelle durch den Busen rein
> Und ungehindert fließt."

And so Iphigenia, far from despising the barbarians, has devoted herself for years to the purification and elevation of the religious and moral life of the Scythian king and his people. Thoas, though a barbarian, is represented as a

man of noble instincts, susceptible to the influence of Iphigenia and capable of appreciating her high ideals. His friendship for her deepens into love and he wishes to wed her. This relation, entirely lacking in the Greek drama, and possibly suggested by La Grange-Chancel,* is fully developed by Goethe and made an essential element in the action of the drama. For how could Thoas have been moved by Iphigenia's grand confession of truth, if a strong personal bond did not exist between them, and if his spiritual life had not already been affected by her humanizing influence? Her strong appeal to his generosity presupposes a nature capable of being stirred by high moral motives.

Iphigenia's inner conflicts in the fourth act are to a large measure called forth by the sense of moral obligation she feels toward the barbarians. This motive is entirely modern. She feels that the laws of morality must apply not only to the Greeks but to all humanity, and must have validity not only on certain occasions but at all times. All the practical considerations of Pylades and her own strong desire to save her brother and return with him to Greece, cannot overcome her moral scruples. She solves the conflict in the only way possible to her, through truth. And after all the obstacles to her return are removed, she leaves in a spirit of deepest gratitude to the king and the Scythians, and establishes laws of hospitality between her own country and Tauris.

The manner in which the recognition between brother and sister is brought about in the Greek and German plays is quite characteristic of the difference of spirit between these two dramas, and throws much light upon the character of the German Iphigenia. In Euripides we find an ingenious plot, which has been much admired

* Cf. p. xxxviii.

in antiquity and in modern times and which is theatrically quite effective. But with Goethe's conception of the characters of Orestes and Iphigenia such a plot was entirely unnecessary. The influence of her pure personality is immediately felt by Orestes. Naturally straightforward, he can least of all dissemble in her presence, and therefore reveals himself directly to her.

Thus the whole dramatic action is determined by the character of Goethe's heroine. Her high principles of humanity finally permeate and transform her whole environment. The old legend dramatized by Euripides treated of the superiority of Greek civilization over that of the barbarians. In Goethe's drama this narrowly national conflict is elevated and enlarged to a conflict between the eternal principles of humanity as embodied in the religion and the life of Iphigenia and the gloomy beliefs and unrestrained passions which obscure the spiritual vision of both Greeks and Scythians. An old royal family of Greece, stained with a succession of monstrous crimes, and living in the belief that the gods are selfish, cruel and tyrannical, and bent upon destroying all who have incurred their hatred, is restored in the person of Orestes by a pure woman who derives her moral strength from a new conception of the gods and new views of conduct. So also the Scythians, living on terms of hostility with the neighboring peoples, and believing that the sacrifice of strangers is welcome to the gods, are induced, under the influence of the ideals of Iphigenia, to abandon their cruel practices and establish the rights of hospitality with the Greeks. The spirit of the old religious beliefs is in the background and affects to some extent the thoughts and actions of all the characters of the drama. So Orestes in his suffering and pessimism believes that he has been sent by Apollo

to Tauris to be slaughtered there. Thoas has only in part emancipated himself from his old belief in the cruelty of the gods, for, when impelled by passion and anger, he orders that the practice of human sacrifices be resumed. Pylades wavers between conflicting views of life, at times expressing the loftiest religious ideals which are in full agreement with those of Iphigenia (cf. ll. 713 ff.), but, when beset by danger, acting quite in the spirit of his model, the crafty Odysseus (cf. ll. 1655 ff.). And the gloomy beliefs of the house of Tantalus cast their dark shadows even upon the pure soul of Iphigenia when she is confronted with temptation. But Iphigenia's deepest religious convictions rise superior to all doubt and danger, and prove their validity through the happy solution of the drama. Thus the famous lines of Goethe:

„Alle menschliche Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit."

nobly express the central thought of the drama. These lines do not apply, as some critics think, only to the healing of Orestes, but also to the last two acts of the play. For when the conflict arises in Iphigenia's soul, it is the principle of 'pure humanity' in her which finally prevails over her pessimism and doubt, and gives her the moral strength to follow the line of conduct by which all dangers and difficulties are overcome.

DRAMATIC FORM AND TECHNIQUE OF GOETHE'S IPHIGENIE.

THE realistic trend of German literature which set in about the middle of the 18th century and which culminated in the Storm and Stress movement caused the approved rules of French classicism to fall into dis-

credit, and almost banished the 'regular' drama from the German stage. With Goethe's *Iphigenie* the best ideals of form of the French classic drama were reintroduced into Germany. The three unities of time, place, and action are here most rigidly observed. The characters are few and of high position. Only once—in the fifth scene of the fifth act—all five characters appear together upon the scene.

The plot is severely simple and free from the conventionalities of the French classical drama. So Goethe rejects the mechanical device of the French *confidant*, who is generally a colorless character used to acquaint the audience with what has happened behind the scene, and replaces him by the character of Arkas, who is distinctly drawn and has an important function in the economy of the drama.

The language is throughout chaste, simple, distinguished. The poet is so imbued with the spirit of classical antiquity that the frequent Greek turns of expression in the drama are natural to him. The provincialisms and colloquialisms of his earlier works are carefully eliminated, every expression is raised to the lofty dignity demanded by the theme, and even in situations of the highest passion and the intensest inner conflicts there is a marked self-restraint in the noble moderation of the language. In accordance with the French classical traditions there is no attempt to adapt the language to the characters; Greeks and barbarians use the same exalted style, so that there is some justice in the criticism that this uniformly noble diction is, from the dramatic point of view, a source of weakness rather than of strength.

The drama has been frequently criticized for its want of action. If dramatic action be interpreted in its usual sense, as something which takes place visibly before

us, the criticism is valid. There is but little of such outward action in the drama. The work is meager in incidents, but contains a great wealth of moral experience. Soul reacts upon soul, producing a strong advancing inner action, which arouses the highest interest and tension in the reader or spectator. This Seelendrama is organized even to the minutest details with consummate skill, no scene or speech is superfluous, everything is carefully prepared and develops of necessity from what precedes. The action of the whole is convincingly true and is worked out with remarkable clearness. The artistic ideal of the Greeks is again realized in this masterpiece.

It is therefore not surprising that Wieland, Schiller in his criticism of 1789, and others, pronounced the work a perfect Greek drama. This is essentially true from the standpoint of its æsthetic form, of its outer structure. Only the classical choruses are omitted, but even these are in a sense replaced by the frequent monologues in which the heroine in moments of great agitation expresses the depth and richness of her spiritual life. But equally true is Schiller's later criticism of 1802 that the drama is 'astonishingly modern and non-Greek.' Here Schiller has reference to the content of the work, its motives, its leading ideas, and the solution of its dramatic conflict. This inner form of the drama is, as we have seen, determined by the grand ideal of humanity of the 18th century, an ideal which we find repeatedly expressed by Lessing, Herder, and Schiller, and which pervades the maturest works of Goethe. All the characters of the drama feel more or less clearly the truth and beauty of this ideal of reine Menschlichkeit, all strive to attain it, but it is realized in the personality of the priestess. It is an essentially modern ideal, developed under the influence of Christian civilization, although we find it occasionally

suggested and even to some extent developed among the greatest of Greek poets and philosophers.* Goethe has succeeded in the *Iphigenie* in expressing in terms of an old Greek legend and in classical form the highest moral ideals of modern civilization, and thus has attained the great aim of the Renaissance poets and artists—the perfect blending of antique form with modern content.

It has been shown by Seuffert and Minor † that Goethe received some valuable hints from Wieland in remodeling the legend of Orestes—especially from Wieland's *Alceste,* the work which Goethe in his youthful enthusiasm for the Greeks had attacked and ridiculed so successfully in his farce *Götter, Helden und Wieland.*‡ In Wieland's libretto we also see the effort to blend antique and modern elements. Like Goethe Wieland took his theme from a classic legend dramatized by Euripides, and remodeled it according to the ethical ideals of the 18th century. His *Alceste* follows the general outlines of the Greek story, the Greek background is retained, the unities are observed, the characters are few and of heroic descent, the style shows throughout the influence of Greek poetry, in short the outer structure and technique of the work are quite similar to those of Goethe's *Iphigenie.* But also its inner structure, its aims and motives show in a measure the same ideals which Goethe developed more profoundly and poetically in his drama. Wieland strives to endow his antique characters with modern thoughts and sentiments

* Cf. here the celebrated utterance of *Antigone*, l. 523:
'I am here not to hate but to love my neighbors.'

† Cf. Seuffert, *Der junge Goethe und Wieland, Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, Vol. XXVI, pp. 253 ff., and Minor, *Die Wielandschen Singspiele und Goethes Iphigenie, Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, Vol. XIX, pp. 232 ff.

‡ Cf. pp. xlv–xlvi.

and soul conflicts, and lays great stress upon psychological development. There are but few incidents in the play, but it abounds in inner action. It has a number of monologues and lyrical passages in which, as in Goethe's drama, the chief characters express their sufferings and inner struggles. In short, the marked similarity in situation, thought, sentiment, and expression between several scenes and passages of the *Alceste* and the *Iphigenie* points to a direct influence of Wieland upon Goethe.



Iphigenie auf Tauris.

Ein Schauspiel.

Iphigenie auf Tauris.

Ein Schauspiel.

Personen:

Iphigenie.
Thoas, König der Taurier.
Orest.
Pylades.
Arkas.

Schauplatz: Hain vor Dianens Tempel.

Erster Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie.

Heraus in eure Schatten, rege Wipfel
Des alten, heil'gen, dichtbelaubten Haines,
Wie in der Göttin stilles Heiligtum,
Tret' ich noch jetzt mit schauderndem Gefühl,
Als wenn ich sie zum erstenmal beträte, 5
Und es gewöhnt sich nicht mein Geist hierher.
So manches Jahr bewahrt mich hier verborgen
Ein hoher Wille, dem ich mich ergebe;
Doch immer bin ich, wie im ersten, fremd.
Denn ach! mich trennt das Meer von den Geliebten, 10
Und an dem Ufer steh' ich lange Tage,
Das Land der Griechen mit der Seele suchend;
Und gegen meine Seufzer bringt die Welle
Nur dumpfe Töne brausend mir herüber.
Weh dem, der fern von Eltern und Geschwistern 15
Ein einsam Leben führt! Ihm zehrt der Gram
Das nächste Glück vor seinen Lippen weg;
Ihm schwärmen abwärts immer die Gedanken
Nach seines Vaters Hallen, wo die Sonne
Zuerst den Himmel vor ihm aufschloß, wo 20
Sich Mitgeborne spielend fest und fester
Mit sanften Banden aneinander knüpften.

Ich rechte mit den Göttern nicht; allein
Der Frauen Zustand ist beklagenswert.
Zu Haus und in dem Kriege herrscht der Mann, 25
Und in der Fremde weiß er sich zu helfen.
Ihn freuet der Besitz; ihn krönt der Sieg;
Ein ehrenvoller Tod ist ihm bereitet.
Wie enggebunden ist des Weibes Glück!
Schon einem rauhen Gatten zu gehorchen, 30
Ist Pflicht und Trost; wie elend, wenn sie gar
Ein feindlich Schicksal in die Ferne treibt!
So hält mich Thoas hier, ein edler Mann,
In ernsten, heil'gen Sklavenbanden fest.
O wie beschämt gesteh' ich, daß ich dir 35
Mit stillem Widerwillen diene, Göttin,
Dir, meiner Retterin! Mein Leben sollte
Zu freiem Dienste dir gewidmet sein.
Auch hab' ich stets auf dich gehofft und hoffe
Noch jetzt auf dich, Diana, die du mich, 40
Des größten Königes verstoßne Tochter,
In deinen heil'gen, sanften Arm genommen.
Ja, Tochter Zeus', wenn du den hohen Mann,
Den du, die Tochter fordernd, ängstigtest,
Wenn du den göttergleichen Agamemnon, 45
Der dir sein Liebstes zum Altare brachte,
Von Trojas umgewandten Mauern rühmlich
Nach seinem Vaterland zurück begleitet,
Die Gattin ihm, Elektren und den Sohn,
Die schönen Schätze, wohl erhalten hast: 50
So gib auch mich den Meinen endlich wieder
Und rette mich, die du vom Tod errettet,
Auch von dem Leben hier, dem zweiten Tode.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Arkas.

Arkas.

Der König sendet mich hierher und beut
Der Priesterin Dianens Gruß und Heil. 55
Dies ist der Tag, da Tauris seiner Göttin
Für wunderbare neue Siege dankt.
Ich eile vor dem König und dem Heer,
Zu melden, daß er kommt und daß es naht.

Iphigenie.

Wir sind bereit, sie würdig zu empfangen, 60
Und unsre Göttin sieht willkommnem Opfer
Von Thoas' Hand mit Gnadenblick entgegen.

Arkas.

O fänd' ich auch den Blick der Priesterin,
Der werten, vielgeehrten, deinen Blick,
O heil'ge Jungfrau, heller, leuchtender, 65
Uns allen gutes Zeichen! Noch bedeckt
Der Gram geheimnisvoll dein Innerstes;
Vergebens harren wir schon Jahre lang
Auf ein vertraulich Wort aus deiner Brust.
So lang' ich dich an dieser Stätte kenne, 70
Ist dies der Blick, vor dem ich immer schaudre;
Und wie mit Eisenbanden bleibt die Seele
Ins Innerste des Busens dir geschmiedet.

Iphigenie.

Wie's der Vertriebnen, der Verwaisten ziemt.

Arkas.

Scheinst du dir hier vertrieben und verwaist? 75

Iphigenie.

Kann uns zum Vaterland die Fremde werden?

Arkas.

Und dir ist fremd das Vaterland geworden.

Iphigenie.

Das ist's, warum mein blutend Herz nicht heilt.
In erster Jugend, da sich kaum die Seele
An Vater, Mutter und Geschwister band, 80
Die neuen Schößlinge, gesellt und lieblich,
Vom Fuß der alten Stämme himmelwärts
Zu dringen strebten, leider faßte da
Ein fremder Fluch mich an und trennte mich
Von den Geliebten, riß das schöne Band 85
Mit ehrner Faust entzwei. Sie war dahin,
Der Jugend beste Freude, das Gedeihn
Der ersten Jahre. Selbst gerettet, war
Ich nur ein Schatten mir, und frische Lust
Des Lebens blüht in mir nicht wieder auf. 90

Arkas.

Wenn du dich so unglücklich nennen willst,
So darf ich dich auch wohl undankbar nennen.

Iphigenie.

Dank habt ihr stets.

Arkas.

Doch nicht den reinen Dank,
Um dessentwillen man die Wohltat tut;
Den frohen Blick, der ein zufriednes Leben 95
Und ein geneigtes Herz dem Wirte zeigt.
Als dich ein tief geheimnisvolles Schicksal
Vor so viel Jahren diesem Tempel brachte,

Kam Thoas dir, als einer Gottgegebnen
Mit Ehrfurcht und mit Neigung zu begegnen; 100
Und dieses Ufer ward dir hold und freundlich,
Das jedem Fremden sonst voll Grausens war,
Weil niemand unser Reich vor dir betrat,
Der an Dianens heil'gen Stufen nicht
Nach altem Brauch, ein blutig Opfer, fiel. 105

Iphigenie.

Frei atmen macht das Leben nicht allein.
Welch Leben ist's, das an der heil'gen Stätte,
Gleich einem Schatten um sein eigen Grab,
Ich nur vertrauern muß? Und nenn' ich das
Ein fröhlich selbstbewußtes Leben, wenn 110
Uns jeder Tag, vergebens hingeträumt,
Zu jenen grauen Tagen vorbereitet,
Die an dem Ufer Lethes, selbstvergessend,
Die Trauerschar der Abgeschiednen feiert?
Ein unnütz Leben ist ein früher Tod; 115
Dies Frauenschicksal ist vor allen meins.

Arkas.

Den edlen Stolz, daß du dir selbst nicht g'nügest,
Verzeih' ich dir, so sehr ich dich bedaure;
Er raubet den Genuß des Lebens dir.
Du hast hier nichts getan seit deiner Ankunft? 120
Wer hat des Königs trüben Sinn erheitert?
Wer hat den alten grausamen Gebrauch,
Daß am Altar Dianens jeder Fremde
Sein Leben blutend läßt, von Jahr zu Jahr
Mit sanfter Überredung aufgehalten 125
Und die Gefangnen vom gewissen Tod

Ins Vaterland so oft zurückgeschickt?
Hat nicht Diane, statt erzürnt zu sein,
Daß sie der blut'gen alten Opfer mangelt,
Dein sanft Gebet in reichem Maß erhört? 130
Umschwebt mit frohem Fluge nicht der Sieg
Das Heer? und eilt er nicht sogar voraus?
Und fühlt nicht jeglicher ein besser Los,
Seitdem der König, der uns weis' und tapfer
So lang' geführet, nun sich auch der Milde 135
In deiner Gegenwart erfreut und uns
Des schweigenden Gehorsams Pflicht erleichtert?
Das nennst du unnütz, wenn von deinem Wesen
Auf Tausende herab ein Balsam träufelt?
Wenn du dem Volke, dem ein Gott dich brachte, 140
Des neuen Glückes ew'ge Quelle wirst
Und an dem unwirtbaren Todesufer
Dem Fremden Heil und Rückkehr zubereitest?

Iphigenie.

Das wenige verschwindet leicht dem Blick,
Der vorwärts sieht, wie viel noch übrig bleibt. 145

Arkas.

Doch lobst du den, der, was er tut, nicht schätzt?

Iphigenie.

Man tadelt den, der seine Taten wägt.

Arkas.

Auch den, der wahren Wert zu stolz nicht achtet,
Wie den, der falschen Wert zu eitel hebt.
Glaub' mir und hör' auf eines Mannes Wort, 150
Der treu und redlich dir ergeben ist:

Wenn heut' der König mit dir redet, so
Erleichtr' ihm, was er dir zu sagen denkt.

Iphigenie.

Du ängstest mich mit jedem guten Worte;
Oft wich ich seinem Antrag mühsam aus. 155

Arkas.

Bedenke, was du tust und was dir nützt.
Seitdem der König seinen Sohn verloren,
Vertraut er wenigen der Seinen mehr,
Und diesen wenigen nicht mehr wie sonst.
Mißgünstig sieht er jedes Edlen Sohn 160
Als seines Reiches Folger an; er fürchtet
Ein einsam hilflos Alter, ja vielleicht
Verwegnen Aufstand und frühzeit'gen Tod.
Der Scythe setzt ins Reden keinen Vorzug,
Am wenigsten der König. Er, der nur 165
Gewohnt ist zu befehlen und zu tun,
Kennt nicht die Kunst, von weitem ein Gespräch
Nach seiner Absicht langsam fein zu lenken.
Erschwer's ihm nicht durch ein rückhaltend Weigern,
Durch ein vorsätzlich Mißverstehen. Geh 170
Gefällig ihm den halben Weg entgegen.

Iphigenie.

Soll ich beschleunigen, was mich bedroht?

Arkas.

Willst du sein Werben eine Drohung nennen?

Iphigenie.

Es ist die schrecklichste von allen mir.

Arkas.

Gib ihm für seine Neigung nur Vertraun. 175

Iphigenie.

Wenn er von Furcht erst meine Seele löst.

Arkas.

Warum verschweigst du deine Herkunft ihm?

Iphigenie.

Weil einer Priesterin Geheimnis ziemt.

Arkas.

Dem König sollte nichts Geheimnis sein;
Und ob er's gleich nicht fordert, fühlt er's doch 180
Und fühlt es tief in seiner großen Seele,
Daß du sorgfältig dich vor ihm verwahrst.

Iphigenie.

Nährt er Verdruß und Unmut gegen mich?

Arkas.

So scheint es fast. Zwar schweigt er auch von dir;
Doch haben hingeworfne Worte mich 185
Belehrt, daß seine Seele fest den Wunsch
Ergriffen hat, dich zu besitzen. Laß,
O überlaß ihn nicht sich selbst! damit
In seinem Busen nicht der Unmut reife
Und dir Entsetzen bringe, du zu spät 190
An meinen treuen Rat mit Reue denkest.

Iphigenie.

Wie? Sinnt der König, was kein edler Mann,
Der seinen Namen liebt und dem Verehrung
Der Himmlischen den Busen bändiget,

Je denken sollte? Sinnt er, vom Altar 195
Mich in sein Bette mit Gewalt zu ziehn?
So ruf' ich alle Götter und vor allen
Dianen, die entschloßne Göttin, an,
Die ihren Schutz der Priesterin gewiß
Und, Jungfrau einer Jungfrau, gern gewährt. 200

Arkas.

Sei ruhig! Ein gewaltsam neues Blut
Treibt nicht den König, solche Jünglingstat
Verwegen auszuüben. Wie er sinnt,
Befürcht' ich andern harten Schluß von ihm,
Den unaufhaltbar er vollenden wird: 205
Denn seine Seel' ist fest und unbeweglich.
Drum bitt' ich dich, vertrau' ihm, sei ihm dankbar,
Wenn du ihm weiter nichts gewähren kannst.

Iphigenie.

O sage, was dir weiter noch bekannt ist.

Arkas.

Erfahr's von ihm. Ich seh' den König kommen; 210
Du ehrst ihn, und dich heißt dein eigen Herz,
Ihm freundlich und vertraulich zu begegnen.
Ein edler Mann wird durch ein gutes Wort
Der Frauen weit geführt.

Iphigenie (allein).

Zwar seh' ich nicht,
Wie ich dem Rat des Treuen folgen soll; 215
Doch folg' ich gern der Pflicht, dem Könige
Für seine Wohltat gutes Wort zu geben,
Und wünsche mir, daß ich dem Mächtigen,
Was ihm gefällt, mit Wahrheit sagen möge.

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas.

Iphigenie.

Mit königlichen Gütern segne dich 220
Die Göttin! Sie gewähre Sieg und Ruhm
Und Reichtum und das Wohl der Deinigen
Und jedes frommen Wunsches Fülle dir!
Daß, der du über viele sorgend herrschest,
Du auch vor vielen seltnes Glück genießest. 225

Thoas.

Zufrieden wär' ich, wenn mein Volk mich rühmte;
Was ich erwarb, genießen andre mehr
Als ich. Der ist am glücklichsten, er sei
Ein König oder ein Geringer, dem
In seinem Hause Wohl bereitet ist. 230
Du nahmest teil an meinen tiefen Schmerzen,
Als mir das Schwert der Feinde meinen Sohn,
Den letzten, besten, von der Seite riß.
So lang' die Rache meinen Geist besaß,
Empfand ich nicht die Öde meiner Wohnung; 235
Doch jetzt, da ich befriedigt wiederkehre,
Ihr Reich zerstört, mein Sohn gerochen ist,
Bleibt mir zu Hause nichts, das mich ergötze.
Der fröhliche Gehorsam, den ich sonst
Aus einem jeden Auge blicken sah, 240
Ist nun von Sorg' und Unmut still gedämpft.
Ein jeder sinnt, was künftig werden wird,
Und folgt dem Kinderlosen, weil er muß.
Nun komm' ich heut' in diesen Tempel, den
Ich oft betrat, um Sieg zu bitten und 245

Für Sieg zu danken. Einen alten Wunsch
Trag' ich im Busen, der auch dir nicht fremd
Noch unerwartet ist: ich hoffe, dich,
Zum Segen meines Volks und mir zum Segen,
Als Braut in meine Wohnung einzuführen. 250

Iphigenie.

Der Unbekannten bietest du zu viel,
O König, an. Es steht die Flüchtige
Beschämt vor dir, die nichts an diesem Ufer
Als Schutz und Ruhe sucht, die du ihr gabst.

Thoas.

Daß du in das Geheimnis deiner Abkunft 255
Vor mir wie vor dem Letzten stets dich hüllest,
Wär' unter keinem Volke recht und gut.
Dies Ufer schreckt die Fremden; das Gesetz
Gebietet's und die Not. Allein von dir,
Die jedes frommen Rechts genießt, ein wohl 260
Von uns empfangner Gast, nach eignem Sinn
Und Willen ihres Tages sich erfreut,
Von dir hofft' ich Vertrauen, das der Wirt
Für seine Treue wohl erwarten darf.

Iphigenie.

Verbarg ich meiner Eltern Namen und 265
Mein Haus, o König, war's Verlegenheit,
Nicht Mißtraun. Denn vielleicht, ach, wüßtest du,
Wer vor dir steht, und welch verwünschtes Haupt
Du nährst und schützest, ein Entsetzen faßte
Dein großes Herz mit seltnem Schauer an, 270
Und statt die Seite deines Thrones mir
Zu bieten, triebest du mich vor der Zeit

Aus deinem Reiche; stießest mich vielleicht,
Eh' zu den Meinen frohe Rückkehr mir
Und meiner Wandrung Ende zugedacht ist, 275
Dem Elend zu, das jeden Schweifenden,
Von seinem Haus Vertriebnen überall
Mit kalter, fremder Schreckenshand erwartet.

Thoas.

Was auch der Rat der Götter mit dir sei,
Und was sie deinem Haus und dir gedenken, 280
So fehlt es doch, seitdem du bei uns wohnst
Und eines frommen Gastes Recht genießest,
An Segen nicht, der mir von oben kommt.
Ich möchte schwer zu überreden sein,
Daß ich an dir ein schuldvoll Haupt beschütze. 285

Iphigenie.

Dir bringt die Wohltat Segen, nicht der Gast.

Thoas.

Was man Verruchten tut, wird nicht gesegnet.
Drum endige dein Schweigen und dein Weigern;
Es fordert dies kein ungerechter Mann.
Die Göttin übergab dich meinen Händen; 290
Wie du ihr heilig warst, so warst du's mir.
Auch sei ihr Wink noch künftig mein Gesetz:
Wenn du nach Hause Rückkehr hoffen kannst,
So sprech' ich dich von aller Fordrung los.
Doch ist der Weg auf ewig dir versperrt, 295
Und ist dein Stamm vertrieben oder durch
Ein ungeheures Unheil ausgelöscht,
So bist du mein durch mehr als e i n Gesetz.
Sprich offen! und du weißt, ich halte Wort.

Iphigenie.

Vom alten Bande löset ungern sich 300
Die Zunge los, ein langverschwiegenes
Geheimnis endlich zu entdecken. Denn,
Einmal vertraut, verläßt es ohne Rückkehr
Des tiefen Herzens sichre Wohnung, schadet,
Wie es die Götter wollen, oder nützt. 305
Vernimm! Ich bin aus Tantalus' Geschlecht.

Thoas.

Du sprichst ein großes Wort gelassen aus.
Nennst du den deinen Ahnherrn, den die Welt
Als einen ehmals Hochbegnadigten
Der Götter kennt? Ist's jener Tantalus, 310
Den Jupiter zu Rat und Tafel zog,
An dessen alterfahrnen, vielen Sinn
Verknüpfenden Gesprächen Götter selbst
Wie an Orakelsprüchen sich ergötzten?

Iphigenie.

Er ist es; aber Götter sollten nicht 315
Mit Menschen wie mit ihresgleichen wandeln;
Das sterbliche Geschlecht ist viel zu schwach,
In ungewohnter Höhe nicht zu schwindeln.
Unedel war er nicht und kein Verräter;
Allein zum Knecht zu groß, und zum Gesellen 320
Des großen Donnrers nur ein Mensch. So war
Auch sein Vergehen menschlich; ihr Gericht
War streng, und Dichter singen: Übermut
Und Untreu' stürzten ihn von Jovis Tisch
Zur Schmach des alten Tartarus hinab. 325
Ach, und sein ganz Geschlecht trug ihren Haß!

Thoas.

Trug es die Schuld des Ahnherrn oder eigne?

Iphigenie.

Zwar die gewalt'ge Brust und der Titanen
Kraftvolles Mark war seiner Söhn' und Enkel
Gewisses Erbteil; doch es schmiedete 330
Der Gott um ihre Stirn ein ehern Band.
Rat, Mäßigung und Weisheit und Geduld
Verbarg er ihrem scheuen, düstern Blick;
Zur Wut ward ihnen jegliche Begier,
Und grenzenlos drang ihre Wut umher. 335
Schon Pelops, der Gewaltig-wollende,
Des Tantalus geliebter Sohn, erwarb
Sich durch Verrat und Mord das schönste Weib,
Önomaus' Erzeugte, Hippodamien.
Sie bringt den Wünschen des Gemahls zwei Söhne, 340
Thyest und Atreus. Neidisch sehen sie
Des Vaters Liebe zu dem ersten Sohn,
Aus einem andern Bette wachsend, an.
Der Haß verbindet sie, und heimlich wagt
Das Paar im Brudermord die erste Tat. 345
Der Vater wähnet Hippodamien
Die Mörderin, und grimmig fordert er
Von ihr den Sohn zurück, und sie entleibt
Sich selbst —

Thoas.

Du schweigest? Fahre fort zu reden!
Laß dein Vertraun dich nicht gereuen! Sprich! 350

Iphigenie.

Wohl dem, der seiner Väter gern gedenkt,
Der froh von ihren Taten, ihrer Größe

Den Hörer unterhält und, still sich freuend,
Ans Ende dieser schönen Reihe sich
Geschlossen sieht! Denn es erzeugt nicht gleich 355
Ein Haus den Halbgott noch das Ungeheuer;
Erst eine Reihe Böser oder Guter
Bringt endlich das Entsetzen, bringt die Freude
Der Welt hervor. — Nach ihres Vaters Tode
Gebieten Atreus und Thyest der Stadt, 360
Gemeinsam herrschend. Lange konnte nicht
Die Eintracht dauern. Bald entehrt Thyest
Des Bruders Bette. Rächend treibet Atreus
Ihn aus dem Reiche. Tückisch hatte schon
Thyest, auf schwere Taten sinnend, lange 365
Dem Bruder einen Sohn entwandt und heimlich
Ihn als den seinen schmeichelnd auferzogen.
Dem füllet er die Brust mit Wut und Rache
Und sendet ihn zur Königsstadt, daß er
Im Oheim seinen eignen Vater morde. 370
Des Jünglings Vorsatz wird entdeckt; der König
Straft grausam den gesandten Mörder, wähnend,
Er töte seines Bruders Sohn. Zu spät
Erfährt er, wer vor seinen trunknen Augen
Gemartert stirbt; und die Begier der Rache 375
Aus seiner Brust zu tilgen, sinnt er still
Auf unerhörte Tat. Er scheint gelassen,
Gleichgültig und versöhnt und lockt den Bruder
Mit seinen beiden Söhnen in das Reich
Zurück, ergreift die Knaben, schlachtet sie, 380
Und setzt die ekle, schaudervolle Speise
Dem Vater bei dem ersten Mahle vor.
Und da Thyest an seinem Fleische sich

Gesättigt, eine Wehmut ihn ergreift,
Er nach den Kindern fragt, den Tritt, die Stimme 385
Der Knaben an des Saales Türe schon
Zu hören glaubt, wirft Atreus grinsend
Ihm Haupt und Füße der Erschlagnen hin. —
Du wendest schaudernd dein Gesicht, o König!
So wendete die Sonn' ihr Antlitz weg 390
Und ihren Wagen aus dem ew'gen Gleise.
Dies sind die Ahnherrn deiner Priesterin;
Und viel unseliges Geschick der Männer,
Viel Taten des verworrnen Sinnes deckt
Die Nacht mit schweren Fittichen und läßt 395
Uns nur in grauenvolle Dämmrung sehn.

Thoas.

Verbirg sie schweigend auch. Es sei genug
Der Greuel! Sage nun, durch welch ein Wunder
Von diesem wilden Stamme du entsprangst.

Iphigenie.

Des Atreus ältster Sohn war Agamemnon; 400
Er ist mein Vater. Doch, ich darf es sagen,
In ihm hab' ich seit meiner ersten Zeit
Ein Muster des vollkommnen Manns gesehn.
Ihm brachte Klytämnestra mich, den Erstling
Der Liebe, dann Elektren. Ruhig herrschte 405
Der König, und es war dem Hause Tantals
Die lang entbehrte Rast gewährt. Allein
Es mangelte dem Glück der Eltern noch
Ein Sohn, und kaum war dieser Wunsch erfüllt,
Daß zwischen beiden Schwestern nun Orest, 410
Der Liebling, wuchs, als neues Übel schon

Dem sichern Hause zubereitet war.
Der Ruf des Krieges ist zu euch gekommen,
Der, um den Raub der schönsten Frau zu rächen,
Die ganze Macht der Fürsten Griechenlands 415
Um Trojens Mauern lagerte. Ob sie
Die Stadt gewonnen, ihrer Rache Ziel
Erreicht, vernahm ich nicht. Mein Vater führte
Der Griechen Heer. In Aulis harrten sie
Auf günst'gen Wind vergebens; denn Diane, 420
Erzürnt auf ihren großen Führer, hielt
Die Eilenden zurück und forderte
Durch Kalchas' Mund des Königs ält'ste Tochter.
Sie lockten mit der Mutter mich ins Lager;
Sie rissen mich vor den Altar und weihten 425
Der Göttin dieses Haupt. — Sie war versöhnt;
Sie wollte nicht mein Blut und hüllte rettend
In eine Wolke mich; in diesem Tempel
Erkannt' ich mich zuerst vom Tode wieder.
Ich bin es selbst, bin Iphigenie, 430
Des Atreus Enkel, Agamemnons Tochter,
Der Göttin Eigentum, die mit dir spricht.

Thoas.

Mehr Vorzug und Vertrauen geb' ich nicht
Der Königstochter als der Unbekannten.
Ich wiederhole meinen ersten Antrag: 435
Komm, folge mir und teile, was ich habe.

Iphigenie.

Wie darf ich solchen Schritt, o König, wagen?
Hat nicht die Göttin, die mich rettete,
Allein das Recht auf mein geweihtes Leben?

Sie hat für mich den Schutzort ausgesucht, 440
Und sie bewahrt mich einem Vater, den
Sie durch den Schein genug gestraft, vielleicht
Zur schönsten Freude seines Alters hier.
Vielleicht ist mir die frohe Rückkehr nah;
Und ich, auf ihren Weg nicht achtend, hätte 445
Mich wider ihren Willen hier gefesselt?
Ein Zeichen bat ich, wenn ich bleiben sollte.

Thoas.

Das Zeichen ist, daß du noch hier verweilst.
Such' Ausflucht solcher Art nicht ängstlich auf.
Man spricht vergebens viel, um zu versagen; 450
Der andre hört von allem nur das Nein.

Iphigenie.

Nicht Worte sind es, die nur blenden sollen;
Ich habe dir mein tiefstes Herz entdeckt.
Und sagst du dir nicht selbst, wie ich dem Vater,
Der Mutter, den Geschwistern mich entgegen 455
Mit ängstlichen Gefühlen sehnen muß?
Daß in den alten Hallen, wo die Trauer
Noch manchmal stille meinen Namen lispelt,
Die Freude, wie um eine Neugeborne,
Den schönsten Kranz von Säul' an Säulen schlinge. 460
O, sendetest du mich auf Schiffen hin!
Du gäbest mir und allen neues Leben.

Thoas.

So kehr' zurück! Tu', was dein Herz dich heißt,
Und höre nicht die Stimme guten Rats
Und der Vernunft. Sei ganz ein Weib und gib 465
Dich hin dem Triebe, der dich zügellos

Ergreift und dahin oder dorthin reißt.
Wenn ihnen eine Lust im Busen brennt,
Hält vom Verräter sie kein heilig Band,
Der sie dem Vater oder dem Gemahl 470
Aus langbewährten, treuen Armen lockt;
Und schweigt in ihrer Brust die rasche Glut,
So dringt auf sie vergebens treu und mächtig
Der Überredung goldne Zunge los.

Iphigenie.

Gedenk', o König, deines edeln Wortes! 475
Willst du mein Zutraun so erwidern? Du
Schienst vorbereitet, alles zu vernehmen.

Thoas.

Aufs Ungehoffte war ich nicht bereitet;
Doch sollt' ich's auch erwarten: wußt' ich nicht,
Daß ich mit einem Weibe handeln ging? 480

Iphigenie.

Schilt nicht, o König, unser arm Geschlecht.
Nicht herrlich wie die euern, aber nicht
Unedel sind die Waffen eines Weibes.
Glaub' es, darin bin ich dir vorzuziehn,
Daß ich dein Glück mehr als du selber kenne. 485
Du wähnest, unbekannt mit dir und mir,
Ein näher Band werd' uns zum Glück vereinen.
Voll guten Mutes, wie voll guten Willens,
Dringst du in mich, daß ich mich fügen soll;
Und hier dank' ich den Göttern, daß sie mir 490
Die Festigkeit gegeben, dieses Bündnis
Nicht einzugehen, das sie nicht gebilligt.

Thoas.

Es spricht kein Gott; es spricht dein eignes Herz.

Iphigenie.

Sie reden nur durch unser Herz zu uns.

Thoas.

Und hab' ich, sie zu hören, nicht das Recht? 495

Iphigenie.

Es überbraust der Sturm die zarte Stimme.

Thoas.

Die Priesterin vernimmt sie wohl allein?

Iphigenie.

Vor allen andern merke sie der Fürst.

Thoas.

Dein heilig Amt und dein geerbtes Recht
An Jovis Tisch bringt dich den Göttern näher 500
Als einen erdgebornen Wilden.

Iphigenie.

So
Büß' ich nun das Vertraun, das du erzwangst.

Thoas.

Ich bin ein Mensch; und besser ist's, wir enden.
So bleibe denn mein Wort: Sei Priesterin
Der Göttin, wie sie dich erkoren hat; 505
Doch mir verzeih' Diane, daß ich ihr
Bisher mit Unrecht und mit innerm Vorwurf
Die alten Opfer vorenthalten habe.
Kein Fremder nahet glücklich unserm Ufer;
Von alters her ist ihm der Tod gewiß. 510
Nur du hast mich mit einer Freundlichkeit,

In der ich bald der zarten Tochter Liebe,
Bald stille Neigung einer Braut zu sehn
Mich tief erfreute, wie mit Zauberbanden
Gefesselt, daß ich meiner Pflicht vergaß. 515
Du hattest mir die Sinnen eingewiegt,
Das Murren meines Volks vernahm ich nicht;
Nun rufen sie die Schuld von meines Sohnes
Frühzeit'gem Tode lauter über mich.
Um deinetwillen halt' ich länger nicht 520
Die Menge, die das Opfer dringend fordert.

Iphigenie.

Um meinetwillen hab' ich's nie begehrt.
Der mißversteht die Himmlischen, der sie
Blutgierig wähnt; er dichtet ihnen nur
Die eignen grausamen Begierden an. 525
Entzog die Göttin mich nicht selbst dem Priester?
Ihr war mein Dienst willkommner als mein Tod.

Thoas.

Es ziemt sich nicht für uns, den heiligen
Gebrauch mit leicht beweglicher Vernunft
Nach unserm Sinn zu deuten und zu lenken. 530
Tu' deine Pflicht, ich werde meine tun.
Zwei Fremde, die wir in des Ufers Höhlen
Versteckt gefunden und die meinem Lande
Nichts Gutes bringen, sind in meiner Hand.
Mit diesen nehme deine Göttin wieder 535
Ihr erstes, rechtes, lang' entbehrtes Opfer!
Ich sende sie hierher; du weißt den Dienst.

Vierter Auftritt.

Iphigenie allein.

Du hast Wolken, gnädige Retterin,
Einzuhüllen unschuldig Verfolgte
Und auf Winden dem ehrnen Geschick sie 540
Aus den Armen über das Meer,
Über der Erde weiteste Strecken,
Und wohin es dir gut dünkt, zu tragen.
Weise bist du und siehest das Künftige;
Nicht vorüber ist dir das Vergangne, 545
Und dein Blick ruht über den Deinen,
Wie dein Licht, das Leben der Nächte,
Über der Erde ruhet und waltet.
O enthalte vom Blut meine Hände!
Nimmer bringt es Segen und Ruhe; 550
Und die Gestalt des zufällig Ermordeten
Wird auf des traurig=unwilligen Mörders
Böse Stunden lauern und schrecken.
Denn die Unsterblichen lieben der Menschen
Weit verbreitete gute Geschlechter 555
Und sie fristen das flüchtige Leben
Gerne dem Sterblichen, wollen ihm gerne
Ihres eigenen, ewigen Himmels
Mitgenießendes fröhliches Anschaun
Eine Weile gönnen und lassen. 560

Zweiter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Orest. Pylades.

Orest.

Es ist der Weg des Todes, den wir treten:
Mit jedem Schritt wird meine Seele stiller.
Als ich Apollen bat, das gräßliche
Geleit der Rachegeister von der Seite
Mir abzunehmen, schien er Hülf' und Rettung 565
Im Tempel seiner vielgeliebten Schwester,
Die über Tauris herrscht, mit hoffnungsreichen,
Gewissen Götterworten zu versprechen;
Und nun erfüllet sich's, daß alle Not
Mit meinem Leben völlig enden soll. 570
Wie leicht wird's mir, dem eine Götterhand
Das Herz zusammendrückt, den Sinn betäubt,
Dem schönen Licht der Sonne zu entsagen!
Und sollen Atreus' Enkel in der Schlacht
Ein siegbekröntes Ende nicht gewinnen, 575
Soll ich wie meine Ahnen, wie mein Vater,
Als Opfertier im Jammertode bluten:
So sei es! Besser hier vor dem Altar
Als im verworfnen Winkel, wo die Netze
Der nahverwandte Meuchelmörder stellt. 580
Laßt mir so lange Ruh', ihr Unterird'schen,
Die nach dem Blut ihr, das von meinen Tritten
Hernieder träufelnd meinen Pfad bezeichnet,
Wie losgelaßne Hunde spürend hetzt!
Laßt mich, ich komme bald zu euch hinab; 585
Das Licht des Tags soll euch nicht sehn, noch mich.

Der Erde schöner, grüner Teppich soll
Kein Tummelplatz für Larven sein. Dort unten
Such' ich euch auf: dort bindet alle dann
Ein gleich Geschick in ew'ge matte Nacht. 590
Nur dich, mein Pylades, dich, meiner Schuld
Und meines Banns unschuldigen Genossen,
Wie ungern nehm' ich dich in jenes Trauerland
Frühzeitig mit! Dein Leben oder Tod
Gibt mir allein noch Hoffnung oder Furcht. 595

Pylades.

Ich bin noch nicht, Orest, wie du, bereit,
In jenes Schattenreich hinabzugehn.
Ich sinne noch, durch die verworrnen Pfade,
Die nach der schwarzen Nacht zu führen scheinen,
Uns zu dem Leben wieder aufzuwinden. 600
Ich denke nicht den Tod; ich sinn' und horche,
Ob nicht zu irgend einer frohen Flucht
Die Götter Rat und Wege zubereiten.
Der Tod, gefürchtet oder ungefürchtet,
Kommt unaufhaltsam. Wenn die Priesterin 605
Schon, unsre Locken weihend abzuschneiden,
Die Hand erhebt, soll dein' und meine Rettung
Mein einziger Gedanke sein. Erhebe
Von diesem Unmut deine Seele; zweifelnd,
Beschleunigest du die Gefahr. Apoll 610
Gab uns das Wort: im Heiligtum der Schwester
Sei Trost und Hülf' und Rückkehr dir bereitet.
Der Götter Worte sind nicht doppelsinnig,
Wie der Gedrückte sie im Unmut wähnt.

Orest.

Des Lebens dunkle Decke breitete 615

Die Mutter schon mir um das zarte Haupt,
Und so wuchs ich herauf, ein Ebenbild
Des Vaters, und es war mein stummer Blick
Ein bittrer Vorwurf ihr und ihrem Buhlen.
Wie oft, wenn still Elektra, meine Schwester, 620
Am Feuer in der tiefen Halle saß,
Drängt' ich beklommen mich an ihren Schoß
Und starrte, wie sie bitter weinte, sie
Mit großen Augen an. Dann sagte sie
Von unserm hohen Vater viel; wie sehr 625
Verlangt' ich, ihn zu sehn, bei ihm zu sein!
Mich wünscht' ich bald nach Troja, ihn bald her.
Es kam der Tag —

Pylades.

O, laß von jener Stunde
Sich Höllengeister nächtlich unterhalten!
Uns gebe die Erinnrung schöner Zeit 630
Zu frischem Heldenlaufe neue Kraft.
Die Götter brauchen manchen guten Mann
Zu ihrem Dienst auf dieser weiten Erde.
Sie haben noch auf dich gezählt; sie gaben
Dich nicht dem Vater zum Geleite mit, 635
Da er unwillig nach dem Orkus ging.

Orest.

O wär' ich, seinen Saum ergreifend, ihm
Gefolgt.

Pylades.

So haben die, die dich erhielten,
Für mich gesorgt; denn was ich worden wäre,
Wenn du nicht lebtest, kann ich mir nicht denken, 640

Da ich mit dir und deinetwillen nur
Seit meiner Kindheit leb' und leben mag.

Orest.

Erinnre mich nicht jener schönen Tage,
Da mir dein Haus die freie Stätte gab,
Dein edler Vater klug und liebevoll 645
Die halberstarrte junge Blüte pflegte;
Da du, ein immer munterer Geselle,
Gleich einem leichten, bunten Schmetterling
Um eine dunkle Blume, jeden Tag
Um mich mit neuem Leben gaukeltest, 650
Mir deine Lust in meine Seele spieltest,
Daß ich, vergessend meiner Not, mit dir
In rascher Jugend hingerissen schwärmte.

Pylades.

Da fing mein Leben an, als ich dich liebte.

Orest.

Sag: meine Not begann, und du sprichst wahr. 655
Das ist das Ängstliche von meinem Schicksal,
Daß ich, wie ein verpesteter Vertriebner,
Geheimen Schmerz und Tod im Busen trage;
Daß, wo ich den gesundsten Ort betrete,
Gar bald um mich die blühenden Gesichter 660
Den Schmerzenszug langsamen Tods verraten.

Pylades.

Der Nächste wär' ich, diesen Tod zu sterben,
Wenn je dein Hauch, Orest, vergiftete.
Bin ich nicht immer noch voll Mut und Lust?
Und Lust und Liebe sind die Fittiche 665
Zu großen Taten.

Orest.

Große Taten? Ja,
Ich weiß die Zeit, da wir sie vor uns sahn!
Wenn wir zusammen oft dem Wilde nach
Durch Berg' und Täler rannten und dereinst,
An Brust und Faust dem hohen Ahnherrn gleich, 670
Mit Keul' und Schwert dem Ungeheuer so,
Dem Räuber auf der Spur zu jagen hofften;
Und dann wir abends an der weiten See
Uns aneinander lehnend ruhig saßen,
Die Wellen bis zu unsern Füßen spielten, 675
Die Welt so weit, so offen vor uns lag;
Da fuhr wohl einer manchmal nach dem Schwert,
Und künft'ge Taten drangen wie die Sterne
Rings um uns her unzählig aus der Nacht.

Pylades.

Unendlich ist das Werk, das zu vollführen 680
Die Seele dringt. Wir möchten jede Tat
So groß gleich tun, als wie sie wächst und wird,
Wenn Jahre lang durch Länder und Geschlechter
Der Mund der Dichter sie vermehrend wälzt.
Es klingt so schön, was unsre Väter taten, 685
Wenn es, in stillen Abendschatten ruhend,
Der Jüngling mit dem Ton der Harfe schlürft;
Und was wir tun, ist, wie es ihnen war,
Voll Müh' und eitel Stückwerk!
So laufen wir nach dem, was vor uns flieht, 690
Und achten nicht des Weges, den wir treten,
Und sehen neben uns der Ahnherrn Tritte
Und ihres Erdelebens Spuren kaum.
Wir eilen immer ihrem Schatten nach,

Der göttergleich in einer weiten Ferne 695
Der Berge Haupt auf goldnen Wolken krönt.
Ich halte nichts von dem, der von sich denkt,
Wie ihn das Volk vielleicht erheben möchte;
Allein, o Jüngling, danke du den Göttern,
Daß sie so früh durch dich so viel getan. 700

Orest.

Wenn sie dem Menschen frohe Tat bescheren
Daß er ein Unheil von den Seinen wendet,
Daß er sein Reich vermehrt, die Grenzen sichert,
Und alte Feinde fallen oder fliehn:
Dann mag er danken! denn ihm hat ein Gott 705
Des Lebens erste, letzte Lust gegönnt.
Mich haben sie zum Schlächter auserkoren,
Zum Mörder meiner doch verehrten Mutter,
Und, eine Schandtat schändlich rächend, mich
Durch ihren Wink zu Grund' gerichtet. Glaube, 710
Sie haben es auf Tantals Haus gerichtet,
Und ich, der Letzte, soll nicht schuldlos, soll
Nicht ehrenvoll vergehn.

Pylades.

Die Götter rächen
Der Väter Missetat nicht an dem Sohn;
Ein jeglicher, gut oder böse, nimmt 715
Sich seinen Lohn mit seiner Tat hinweg.
Es erbt der Eltern Segen, nicht ihr Fluch.

Orest.

Uns führt ihr Segen, dünkt mich, nicht hierher.

Pylades.

Doch wenigstens der hohen Götter Wille.

Orest.

So ist's ihr Wille denn, der uns verderbt. 720

Pylades.

Tu', was sie dir gebieten, und erwarte.
Bringst du die Schwester zu Apollen hin,
Und wohnen beide dann vereint zu Delphi,
Verehrt von einem Volk, das edel denkt,
So wird für diese Tat das hohe Paar 725
Dir gnädig sein, sie werden aus der Hand
Der Unterird'schen dich erretten. Schon
In diesen heil'gen Hain wagt keine sich.

Orest.

So hab' ich wenigstens geruh'gen Tod.

Pylades.

Ganz anders denk' ich, und nicht ungeschickt 730
Hab' ich das schon Geschehne mit dem Künft'gen
Verbunden und im stillen ausgelegt.
Vielleicht reift in der Götter Rat schon lange
Das große Werk. Diana sehnet sich
Von diesem rauhen Ufer der Barbaren 735
Und ihren blut'gen Menschenopfern weg.
Wir waren zu der schönen Tat bestimmt,
Uns wird sie auferlegt, und seltsam sind
Wir an der Pforte schon gezwungen hier.

Orest.

Mit seltner Kunst flichtst du der Götter Rat 740
Und deine Wünsche klug in eins zusammen.

Pylades.

Was ist des Menschen Klugheit, wenn sie nicht
Auf jener Willen droben achtend lauscht?

Zu einer schweren Tat beruft ein Gott
Den edeln Mann, der viel verbrach, und legt 745
Ihm auf, was uns unmöglich scheint, zu enden.
Es siegt der Held, und büßend dienet er
Den Göttern und der Welt, die ihn verehrt.

Orest.

Bin ich bestimmt zu leben und zu handeln,
So nehm' ein Gott von meiner schweren Stirn 750
Den Schwindel weg, der auf dem schlüpfrigen,
Mit Mutterblut besprengten Pfade fort
Mich zu den Toten reißt. Er trockne gnädig
Die Quelle, die, mir aus der Mutter Wunden
Entgegensprudelnd, ewig mich befleckt. 755

Pylades.

Erwart' es ruhiger! Du mehrst das Übel
Und nimmst das Amt der Furien auf dich.
Laß mich nur sinnen, bleibe still! Zuletzt,
Bedarf's zur Tat vereinter Kräfte, dann
Ruf' ich dich auf, und beide schreiten wir 760
Mit überlegter Kühnheit zur Vollendung.

Orest.

Ich hör' Ulyssen reden.

Pylades.

Spotte nicht.
Ein jeglicher muß seinen Helden wählen,
Dem er die Wege zum Olymp hinauf
Sich nacharbeitet. Laß es mich gestehn: 765
Mir scheinet List und Klugheit nicht den Mann
Zu schänden, der sich kühnen Taten weiht.

Orest.

Ich schätze den, der tapfer ist und g'rad.

Pylades.

Drum hab' ich keinen Rat von dir verlangt.
Schon ist ein Schritt getan. Von unsern Wächtern 770
Hab' ich bisher gar vieles ausgelockt.
Ich weiß, ein fremdes, göttergleiches Weib
Hält jenes blutige Gesetz gefesselt;
Ein reines Herz und Weihrauch und Gebet
Bringt sie den Göttern dar. Man rühmet hoch 775
Die Gütige; man glaubet, sie entspringe
Vom Stamm der Amazonen, sei geflohn,
Um einem großen Unheil zu entgehn.

Orest.

Es scheint, ihr lichtes Reich verlor die Kraft
Durch des Verbrechers Nähe, den der Fluch 780
Wie eine breite Nacht verfolgt und deckt.
Die fromme Blutgier löst den alten Brauch
Von seinen Fesseln los, uns zu verderben.
Der wilde Sinn des Königs tötet uns;
Ein Weib wird uns nicht retten, wenn er zürnt. 785

Pylades.

Wohl uns, daß es ein Weib ist! denn ein Mann,
Der beste selbst, gewöhnet seinen Geist
An Grausamkeit und macht sich auch zuletzt
Aus dem, was er verabscheut, ein Gesetz,
Wird aus Gewohnheit hart und fast unkenntlich. 790
Allein ein Weib bleibt stet auf einem Sinn,
Den sie gefaßt. Du rechnest sicherer
Auf sie im Guten wie im Bösen. — Still!

Sie kommt; laß uns allein. Ich darf nicht gleich
Ihr unsre Namen nennen, unser Schicksal 795
Nicht ohne Rückhalt ihr vertraun. Du gehst,
Und eh' sie mit dir spricht, treff' ich dich noch.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Pylades.

Iphigenie.

Woher du seist und kommst, o Fremdling, sprich!
Mir scheint es, daß ich eher einem Griechen
Als einem Scythen dich vergleichen soll. 800

(Sie nimmt ihm die Ketten ab.)

Gefährlich ist die Freiheit, die ich gebe;
Die Götter wenden ab, was euch bedroht!

Pylades.

O süße Stimme! Vielwillkommner Ton
Der Muttersprach' in einem fremden Lande!
Des väterlichen Hafens blaue Berge 805
Seh' ich Gefangner neu willkommen wieder
Vor meinen Augen. Laß dir diese Freude
Versichern, daß auch ich ein Grieche bin!
Vergessen hab' ich einen Augenblick,
Wie sehr ich dein bedarf, und meinen Geist 810
Der herrlichen Erscheinung zugewendet.
O, sage, wenn dir ein Verhängnis nicht
Die Lippe schließt, aus welchem unsrer Stämme
Du deine göttergleiche Herkunft zählst.

Iphigenie.

Die Priesterin, von ihrer Göttin selbst 815
Gewählet und geheiligt, spricht mit dir.

Das laß dir g'nügen; sage, wer du seist,
Und welch unselig-waltendes Geschick
Mit dem Gefährten dich hierher gebracht.

Pylades.

Leicht kann ich dir erzählen, welch ein Übel 820
Mit lastender Gesellschaft uns verfolgt.
O, könntest du der Hoffnung frohen Blick
Uns auch so leicht, du Göttliche, gewähren!
Aus Kreta sind wir, Söhne des Adrasts:
Ich bin der jüngste, Cephalus genannt, 825
Und er Laodamas, der älteste
Des Hauses. Zwischen uns stand rauh und wild
Ein mittlerer und trennte schon im Spiel
Der ersten Jugend Einigkeit und Lust.
Gelassen folgten wir der Mutter Worten, 830
So lang' des Vaters Kraft vor Troja stritt;
Doch als er beutereich zurücke kam
Und kurz darauf verschied, da trennte bald
Der Streit um Reich und Erbe die Geschwister.
Ich neigte mich zum ältsten. Er erschlug 835
Den Bruder. Um der Blutschuld willen treibt
Die Furie gewaltig ihn umher.
Doch diesem wilden Ufer sendet uns
Apoll, der Delphische, mit Hoffnung zu.
Im Tempel seiner Schwester hieß er uns 840
Der Hülfe segensvolle Hand erwarten.
Gefangen sind wir und hierher gebracht
Und dir als Opfer dargestellt. Du weißt's.

Iphigenie.

Fiel Troja? Teurer Mann, versichr' es mir.

Pylades.

Es liegt. O, sichre du uns Rettung zu! 845
Beschleunige die Hülfe, die ein Gott
Versprach. Erbarme meines Bruders dich.
O, sag' ihm bald ein gutes holdes Wort;
Doch schone seiner, wenn du mit ihm sprichst,
Das bitt' ich eifrig: denn es wird gar leicht 850
Durch Freud' und Schmerz und durch Erinnerung
Sein Innerstes ergriffen und zerrüttet.
Ein fieberhafter Wahnsinn fällt ihn an,
Und seine schöne freie Seele wird
Den Furien zum Raube hingegeben. 855

Iphigenie.

So groß dein Unglück ist, beschwör' ich dich,
Vergiß es, bis du mir genug getan.

Pylades.

Die hohe Stadt, die zehen lange Jahre
Dem ganzen Heer der Griechen widerstand,
Liegt nun im Schutte, steigt nicht wieder auf. 860
Doch manche Gräber unsrer Besten heißen
Uns an das Ufer der Barbaren denken.
Achill liegt dort mit seinem schönen Freunde.

Iphigenie.

So seid ihr Götterbilder auch zu Staub!

Pylades.

Auch Palamedes, Ajax Telamons, 865
Sie sahn des Vaterlandes Tag nicht wieder.

Iphigenie.

Er schweigt von meinem Vater, nennt ihn nicht

Mit den Erschlagnen. Ja! er lebt mir noch!
Ich werd' ihn sehn. O hoffe, liebes Herz!

Pylades.

Doch selig sind die Tausende, die starben 870
Den bittersüßen Tod von Feindes Hand;
Denn wüste Schrecken und ein traurig Ende
Hat den Rückkehrenden statt des Triumphs
Ein feindlich aufgebrachter Gott bereitet.
Kommt denn der Menschen Stimme nicht zu euch? 875
So weit sie reicht, trägt sie den Ruf umher
Von unerhörten Taten, die geschahn.
So ist der Jammer, der Mycenens Hallen
Mit immer wiederholten Seufzern füllt,
Dir ein Geheimnis? — Klytämnestra hat 880
Mit Hülf' Ägisthens den Gemahl berückt,
Am Tage seiner Rückkehr ihn ermordet! —
Ja, du verehrest dieses Königs Haus!
Ich seh' es, deine Brust bekämpft vergebens
Das unerwartet ungeheure Wort. 885
Bist du die Tochter eines Freundes? bist
Du nachbarlich in dieser Stadt geboren?
Verbirg es nicht und rechne mir's nicht zu,
Daß ich der Erste diese Greuel melde.

Iphigenie.

Sag' an, wie ward die schwere Tat vollbracht? 890

Pylades.

Am Tage seiner Ankunft, da der König,
Vom Bad erquickt und ruhig, sein Gewand
Aus der Gemahlin Hand verlangend, stieg,
Warf die Verderbliche ein faltenreich

Und künstlich sich verwirrendes Gewebe 895
Ihm auf die Schultern, um das edle Haupt;
Und da er wie von einem Netze sich
Vergebens zu entwickeln strebte, schlug
Ägisth ihn, der Verräter, und verhüllt
Ging zu den Toten dieser große Fürst. 900

Iphigenie.

Und welchen Lohn erhielt der Mitverschworne?

Pylades.

Ein Reich und Bette, das er schon besaß.

Iphigenie

So trieb zur Schandtat eine böse Lust?

Pylades.

Und einer alten Rache tief Gefühl.

Iphigenie.

Und wie beleidigte der König sie? 905

Pylades.

Mit schwerer Tat, die, wenn Entschuldigung
Des Mordes wäre, sie entschuldigte.
Nach Aulis lockt' er sie und brachte dort,
Als eine Gottheit sich der Griechen Fahrt
Mit ungestümen Winden widersetzte, 910
Die ält'ste Tochter, Iphigenien,
Vor den Altar Dianens, und sie fiel,
Ein blutig Opfer für der Griechen Heil.
Dies, sagt man, hat ihr einen Widerwillen
So tief ins Herz geprägt, daß sie dem Werben 915
Ägisthens sich ergab und den Gemahl
Mit Netzen des Verderbens selbst umschlang.

Iphigenie (sich verhüllend).

Es ist genug. Du wirst mich wiedersehn.

Pylades (allein).

Von dem Geschick des Königshauses scheint
Sie tief gerührt. Wer sie auch immer sei, 920
So hat sie selbst den König wohl gekannt
Und ist zu unserm Glück aus hohem Hause
Hierher verkauft. Nur stille, liebes Herz,
Und laß dem Stern der Hoffnung, der uns blinkt,
Mit frohem Mut uns klug entgegensteuern. 925

Dritter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Orest.

Iphigenie.

Unglücklicher, ich löse deine Bande
Zum Zeichen eines schmerzlichern Geschicks.
Die Freiheit, die das Heiligtum gewährt,
Ist, wie der letzte lichte Lebensblick
Des schwer Erkrankten, Todesbote. Noch 930
Kann ich es mir und darf es mir nicht sagen,
Daß ihr verloren seid! Wie könnt' ich euch
Mit mörderischer Hand dem Tode weihen?
Und niemand, wer es sei, darf euer Haupt,
So lang' ich Priesterin Dianens bin, 935
Berühren. Doch verweigr' ich jene Pflicht,
Wie sie der aufgebrachte König fordert,
So wählt er eine meiner Jungfraun mir
Zur Folgerin, und ich vermag alsdann

Mit heißem Wunsch allein euch beizustehn. 940
O werter Landsmann! Selbst der letzte Knecht,
Der an den Herd der Vatergötter streifte,
Ist uns in fremdem Lande hoch willkommen;
Wie soll ich euch genug mit Freud' und Segen
Empfangen, die ihr mir das Bild der Helden, 945
Die ich von Eltern her verehren lernte,
Entgegenbringet und das innre Herz
Mit neuer, schöner Hoffnung schmeichelnd labet!

Orest.

Verbirgst du deinen Namen, deine Herkunft
Mit klugem Vorsatz? oder darf ich wissen, 950
Wer mir, gleich einer Himmlischen, begegnet?

Iphigenie.

Du sollst mich kennen. Jetzo sag' mir an,
Was ich nur halb von deinem Bruder hörte,
Das Ende derer, die, von Troja kehrend,
Ein hartes unerwartetes Geschick 955
Auf ihrer Wohnung Schwelle stumm empfing.
Zwar ward ich jung an diesen Strand geführt;
Doch wohl erinnr' ich mich des scheuen Blicks,
Den ich mit Staunen und mit Bangigkeit
Auf jene Helden warf. Sie zogen aus, 960
Als hätte der Olymp sich aufgetan
Und die Gestalten der erlauchten Vorwelt
Zum Schrecken Ilions herabgesendet,
Und Agamemnon war vor allen herrlich!
O, sage mir: er fiel, sein Haus betretend, 965
Durch seiner Frauen und Ägisthens Tücke?

Orest.

Du sagst's!

Iphigenie.

Weh dir, unseliges Mycen!
So haben Tantals Enkel Fluch auf Fluch
Mit vollen wilden Händen ausgesät
Und, gleich dem Unkraut, wüste Häupter schüttelnd 970
Und tausendfält'gen Samen um sich streuend,
Den Kindeskindern nahverwandte Mörder
Zur ew'gen Wechselwut erzeugt! — Enthülle,
Was von der Rede deines Bruders schnell
Die Finsternis des Schreckens mir verdeckte. 975
Wie ist des großen Stammes letzter Sohn,
Das holde Kind, bestimmt, des Vaters Rächer
Dereinst zu sein, wie ist Orest dem Tage
Des Bluts entgangen? Hat ein gleich Geschick
Mit des Avernus Netzen ihn umschlungen? 980
Ist er gerettet? Lebt er? Lebt Elektra?

Orest.

Sie leben.

Iphigenie.

Goldne Sonne, leihe mir
Die schönsten Strahlen, lege sie zum Dank
Vor Jovis Thron! denn ich bin arm und stumm.

Orest.

Bist du gastfreundlich diesem Königshause, 985
Bist du mit nähern Banden ihm verbunden,
Wie deine schöne Freude mir verrät:
So bändige dein Herz und halt' es fest!
Denn unerträglich muß dem Fröhlichen
Ein jäher Rückfall in die Schmerzen sein. 990
Du weißt nur, merk' ich, Agamemnons Tod.

Iphigenie.

Hab' ich an dieser Nachricht nicht genug?

Orest.

Du hast des Greuels Hälfte nur erfahren.

Iphigenie.

Was fürcht' ich noch? Orest, Elektra leben.

Orest.

Und fürchtest du für Klytämnestren nichts? 995

Iphigenie.

Sie rettet weder Hoffnung, weder Furcht.

Orest.

Auch schied sie aus dem Land der Hoffnung ab.

Iphigenie.

Vergoß sie reuig wütend selbst ihr Blut?

Orest.

Nein, doch ihr eigen Blut gab ihr den Tod.

Iphigenie.

Sprich deutlicher, daß ich nicht länger sinne. 1000
Die Ungewißheit schlägt mir tausendfältig
Die dunkeln Schwingen um das bange Haupt.

Orest.

So haben mich die Götter auserseh̃n
Zum Boten einer Tat, die ich so gern
Ins klanglos-dumpfe Höhlenreich der Nacht 1005
Verbergen möchte? Wider meinen Willen
Zwingt mich dein holder Mund; allein er darf
Auch etwas Schmerzlichs fordern und erhält's.
Am Tage, da der Vater fiel, verbarg

Elektra rettend ihren Bruder; Strophius, 1010
Des Vaters Schwäher, nahm ihn willig auf,
Erzog ihn neben seinem eignen Sohne,
Der, Pylades genannt, die schönsten Bande
Der Freundschaft um den Angekommnen knüpfte.
Und wie sie wuchsen, wuchs in ihrer Seele 1015
Die brennende Begier, des Königs Tod
Zu rächen. Unversehen, fremd gekleidet,
Erreichen sie Mycen, als brächten sie
Die Trauernachricht von Orestens Tode
Mit seiner Asche. Wohl empfänget sie 1020
Die Königin, sie treten in das Haus.
Elektren gibt Orest sich zu erkennen;
Sie bläst der Rache Feuer in ihm auf,
Das vor der Mutter heil'ger Gegenwart
In sich zurückgebrannt war. Stille führt 1025
Sie ihn zum Orte, wo sein Vater fiel,
Wo eine alte leichte Spur des frech
Vergoßnen Blutes oftgewaschnen Boden
Mit blassen ahndungsvollen Streifen färbte.
Mit ihrer Feuerzunge schilderte 1030
Sie jeden Umstand der verruchten Tat,
Ihr knechtisch elend durchgebrachtes Leben,
Den Übermut der glücklichen Verräter
Und die Gefahren, die nun der Geschwister
Von einer stiefgewordnen Mutter warteten. — 1035
Hier drang sie jenen alten Dolch ihm auf,
Der schon in Tantals Hause grimmig wütete,
Und Klytämnestra fiel durch Sohnes Hand.

Iphigenie.

Unsterbliche, die ihr den reinen Tag

Auf immer neuen Wolken selig lebet, 1040
Habt ihr nur darum mich so manches Jahr
Von Menschen abgesondert, mich so nah
Bei euch gehalten, mir die kindliche
Beschäftigung, des heil'gen Feuers Glut
Zu nähren, aufgetragen, meine Seele 1045
Der Flamme gleich in ew'ger frommer Klarheit
Zu euern Wohnungen hinaufgezogen,
Daß ich nur meines Hauses Greuel später
Und tiefer fühlen sollte? — Sage mir
Vom Unglücksel'gen! Sprich mir von Orest! — 1050

Orest.

O, könnte man von seinem Tode sprechen!
Wie gärend stieg aus der Erschlagnen Blut
Der Mutter Geist
Und ruft der Nacht uralten Töchtern zu:
„Laßt nicht den Muttermörder entfliehn! 1055
Verfolgt den Verbrecher! Euch ist er geweiht!"
Sie horchen auf, es schaut ihr hohler Blick
Mit der Begier des Adlers um sich her.
Sie rühren sich in ihren schwarzen Höhlen,
Und aus den Winkeln schleichen ihre Gefährten, 1060
Der Zweifel und die Reue, leis herbei.
Vor ihnen steigt ein Dampf vom Acheron;
In seinen Wolkenkreisen wälzet sich
Die ewige Betrachtung des Geschehnen
Verwirrend um des Schuld'gen Haupt umher. 1065
Und sie, berechtigt zum Verderben, treten
Der gottbesäten Erde schönen Boden,
Von dem ein alter Fluch sie längst verbannte.
Den Flüchtigen verfolgt ihr schneller Fuß;

Sie geben nur, um neu zu schrecken, Rast. 1070

Iphigenie.

Unseliger, du bist in gleichem Fall
Und fühlst, was er, der arme Flüchtling, leidet!

Orest.

Was sagst du mir? Was wähnst du gleichen Fall?

Iphigenie.

Dich drückt ein Brudermord wie jenen; mir
Vertraute dies dein jüngster Bruder schon. 1075

Orest.

Ich kann nicht leiden, daß du, große Seele,
Mit einem falschen Wort betrogen werdest.
Ein lügenhaft Gewebe knüpf' ein Fremder
Dem Fremden, sinnreich und der List gewohnt,
Zur Falle vor die Füße; zwischen uns 1080
Sei Wahrheit!
Ich bin Orest! und dieses schuld'ge Haupt
Senkt nach der Grube sich und sucht den Tod;
In jeglicher Gestalt sei er willkommen!
Wer du auch seist, so wünsch' ich Rettung dir 1085
Und meinem Freunde; mir wünsch' ich sie nicht.
Du scheinst hier wider Willen zu verweilen;
Erfindet Rat zur Flucht und laßt mich hier.
Es stürze mein entseelter Leib vom Fels,
Es rauche bis zum Meer hinab mein Blut 1090
Und bringe Fluch dem Ufer der Barbaren!
Geht ihr, daheim im schönen Griechenland
Ein neues Leben freundlich anzufangen.

(Er entfernt sich.)

Iphigenie.

So steigst du denn, Erfüllung, schönste Tochter
Des größten Vaters, endlich zu mir nieder! 1095
Wie ungeheuer steht dein Bild vor mir;
Kaum reicht mein Blick dir an die Hände, die,
Mit Frucht und Segenskränzen angefüllt,
Die Schätze des Olympus niederbringen.
Wie man den König an dem Übermaß 1100
Der Gaben kennt — denn ihm muß wenig scheinen,
Was Tausenden schon Reichtum ist — so kennt
Man euch, ihr Götter, an gesparten, lang'
Und weise zubereiteten Geschenken.
Denn ihr allein wißt, was uns frommen kann, 1105
Und schaut der Zukunft ausgedehntes Reich,
Wenn jedes Abends Stern- und Nebelhülle
Die Aussicht uns verdeckt. Gelassen hört
Ihr unser Flehn, das um Beschleunigung
Euch kindisch bittet; aber eure Hand 1110
Bricht unreif nie die goldnen Himmelsfrüchte;
Und wehe dem, der, ungeduldig sie
Ertrotzend, saure Speise sich zum Tod
Genießt. O, laßt das lang erwartete,
Noch kaum gedachte Glück nicht, wie den Schatten 1115
Des abgeschiednen Freundes, eitel mir
Und dreifach schmerzlicher vorübergehn!

Orest (tritt wieder zu ihr).

Rufst du die Götter an für dich und Pylades,
So nenne meinen Namen nicht mit eurem.
Du rettest den Verbrecher nicht, zu dem 1120
Du dich gesellst, und teilest Fluch und Not.

Iphigenie.

Mein Schicksal ist an deines fest gebunden.

Orest.

Mit nichten! Laß allein und unbegleitet
Mich zu den Toten gehn. Verhülltest du
In deinen Schleier selbst den Schuldigen, 1125
Du birgst ihn nicht vorm Blick der immer Wachen,
Und deine Gegenwart, du Himmlische,
Drängt sie nur seitwärts und verscheucht sie nicht.
Sie dürfen mit den ehrnen frechen Füßen
Des heil'gen Waldes Boden nicht betreten; 1130
Doch hör' ich aus der Ferne hier und da
Ihr gräßliches Gelächter. Wölfe harren
So um den Baum, auf den ein Reisender
Sich rettete. Da draußen ruhen sie
Gelagert; und verlass' ich diesen Hain, 1135
Dann steigen sie, die Schlangenhäupter schüttelnd,
Von allen Seiten Staub erregend, auf
Und treiben ihre Beute vor sich her.

Iphigenie.

Kannst du, Orest, ein freundlich Wort vernehmen?

Orest.

Spar' es für einen Freund der Götter auf. 1140

Iphigenie.

Sie geben dir zu neuer Hoffnung Licht.

Orest.

Durch Rauch und Qualm seh' ich den matten Schein
Des Totenflusses mir zur Hölle leuchten.

Iphigenie.

Hast du Elektren, eine Schwester nur?

Orest.

Die eine kannt' ich; doch die ält'ste nahm 1145
Ihr gut Geschick, das uns so schrecklich schien,
Beizeiten aus dem Elend unsers Hauses.
O laß dein Fragen und geselle dich
Nicht auch zu den Erinnyen; sie blasen
Mir schadenfroh die Asche von der Seele 1150
Und leiden nicht, daß sich die letzten Kohlen
Von unsers Hauses Schreckensbrande still
In mir verglimmen. Soll die Glut denn ewig,
Vorsätzlich angefacht, mit Höllenschwefel
Genährt, mir auf der Seele marternd brennen? 1155

Iphigenie.

Ich bringe süßes Rauchwerk in die Flamme.
O laß den reinen Hauch der Liebe dir
Die Glut des Busens leise wehend kühlen.
Orest, mein Teurer, kannst du nicht vernehmen?
Hat das Geleit der Schreckensgötter so 1160
Das Blut in deinen Adern aufgetrocknet?
Schleicht, wie vom Haupt der gräßlichen Gorgone,
Versteinernd dir ein Zauber durch die Glieder?
O, wenn vergoßnen Mutterblutes Stimme
Zur Höll' hinab mit dumpfen Tönen ruft, 1165
Soll nicht der reinen Schwester Segenswort
Hilfreiche Götter vom Olympus rufen?

Orest.

Es ruft! es ruft! So willst du mein Verderben?
Verbirgt in dir sich eine Rachegöttin?

Wer bist du, deren Stimme mir entsetzlich 1170
Das Innerste in seinen Tiefen wendet?

Iphigenie.

Es zeigt sich dir im tiefsten Herzen an:
Orest, ich bin's! Sieh Iphigenien!
Ich lebe!

Orest.

Du!

Iphigenie.

Mein Bruder!

Orest.

Laß! Hinweg!
Ich rate dir, berühre nicht die Locken! 1175
Wie von Kreusas Brautkleid zündet sich
Ein unauslöschlich Feuer von mir fort.
Laß mich! Wie Herkules will ich Unwürd'ger
Den Tod voll Schmach, in mich verschlossen, sterben.

Iphigenie.

Du wirst nicht untergehn! O daß ich nur 1180
Ein ruhig Wort von dir vernehmen könnte!
O löse meine Zweifel, laß des Glückes,
Des lang erflehten, mich auch sicher werden.
Es wälzet sich ein Rad von Freud' und Schmerz
Durch meine Seele. Von dem fremden Manne 1185
Entfernet mich ein Schauer; doch es reißt
Mein Innerstes gewaltig mich zum Bruder.

Orest.

Ist hier Lyäens Tempel? Und ergreift
Unbändig-heil'ge Wut die Priesterin?

Iphigenie.

O höre mich! O sieh mich an, wie mir 1190
Nach einer langen Zeit das Herz sich öffnet
Der Seligkeit, dem Liebsten, was die Welt
Noch für mich tragen kann, das Haupt zu küssen,
Mit meinen Armen, die den leeren Winden
Nur ausgebreitet waren, dich zu fassen. 1195
O laß mich! Laß mich! Denn es quillet heller
Nicht vom Parnaß die ew'ge Quelle sprudelnd
Von Fels zu Fels ins goldne Tal hinab,
Wie Freude mir vom Herzen wallend fließt
Und wie ein selig Meer mich rings umfängt. 1200
Orest! Orest! Mein Bruder!

Orest.

Schöne Nymphe,
Ich traue dir und deinem Schmeicheln nicht.
Diana fordert strenge Dienerinnen
Und rächet das entweihte Heiligtum.
Entferne deinen Arm von meiner Brust! 1205
Und wenn du einen Jüngling rettend lieben,
Das schöne Glück ihm zärtlich bieten willst,
So wende meinem Freunde dein Gemüt,
Dem würd'gern Manne, zu. Er irrt umher
Auf jenem Felsenpfade; such' ihn auf, 1210
Weis' ihn zurecht und schone meiner.

Iphigenie.

Fasse
Dich, Bruder, und erkenne die Gefundne!
Schilt einer Schwester reine Himmelsfreude
Nicht unbesonnene, strafbare Lust.

O nehmt den Wahn ihm von dem starren Auge, 1215
Daß uns der Augenblick der höchsten Freude
Nicht dreifach elend mache! Sie ist hier,
Die längst verlorne Schwester. Vom Altar
Riß mich die Göttin weg und rettete
Hierher mich in ihr eigen Heiligtum. 1220
Gefangen bist du, dargestellt zum Opfer,
Und findest in der Priesterin die Schwester.

Orest.

Unselige! So mag die Sonne denn
Die letzten Greuel unsers Hauses sehn!
Ist nicht Elektra hier? damit auch sie 1225
Mit uns zu Grunde gehe, nicht ihr Leben
Zu schwererem Geschick und Leiden friste.
Gut, Priesterin! ich folge zum Altar:
Der Brudermord ist hergebrachte Sitte
Des alten Stammes; und ich danke, Götter, 1230
Daß ihr mich ohne Kinder auszurotten
Beschlossen habt. Und laß dir raten, habe
Die Sonne nicht zu lieb und nicht die Sterne;
Komm, folge mir ins dunkle Reich hinab!
Wie sich vom Schwefelpfuhl erzeugte Drachen, 1235
Bekämpfend die verwandte Brut, verschlingen,
Zerstört sich selbst das wütende Geschlecht;
Komm kinderlos und schuldlos mit hinab!
Du siehst mich mit Erbarmen an? Laß ab!
Mit solchen Blicken suchte Klytämnestra 1240
Sich einen Weg nach ihres Sohnes Herzen;
Doch sein geschwungner Arm traf ihre Brust.
Die Mutter fiel. — Tritt auf, unwill'ger Geist!

Im Kreis geschlossen tretet an, ihr Furien,
Und wohnet dem willkommnen Schauspiel bei, 1245
Dem letzten, gräßlichsten, das ihr bereitet!
Nicht Haß und Rache schärfen ihren Dolch;
Die liebevolle Schwester wird zur Tat
Gezwungen. Weine nicht! Du hast nicht schuld.
Seit meinen ersten Jahren hab' ich nichts 1250
Geliebt, wie ich dich lieben könnte, Schwester.
Ja, schwinge deinen Stahl, verschone nicht,
Zerreiße diesen Busen und eröffne
Den Strömen, die hier sieden, einen Weg.

(Er sinkt in Ermattung.)

Iphigenie.

Allein zu tragen dieses Glück und Elend 1255
Vermag ich nicht. — Wo bist du, Pylades?
Wo find' ich deine Hilfe, teurer Mann?

(Sie entfernt sich suchend.)

Zweiter Auftritt.

Orest aus seiner Betäubung erwachend und sich aufrichtend.

Noch einen! reiche mir aus Lethes Fluten
Den letzten kühlen Becher der Erquickung!
Bald ist der Krampf des Lebens aus dem Busen 1260
Hinweggespült; bald fließet still mein Geist,
Der Quelle des Vergessens hingegeben,
Zu euch, ihr Schatten, in die ew'gen Nebel.
Gefällig laßt in eurer Ruhe sich
Den umgetriebnen Sohn der Erde laben! — 1265
Welch ein Gelispel hör' ich in den Zweigen,

Welch ein Geräusch aus jener Dämmrung säuseln? —
Sie kommen schon, den neuen Gast zu sehn!
Wer ist die Schar, die herrlich miteinander
Wie ein versammelt Fürstenhaus sich freut? 1270
Sie gehen friedlich, Alt' und Junge, Männer
Mit Weibern; göttergleich und ähnlich scheinen
Die wandelnden Gestalten. Ja, sie sind's,
Die Ahnherrn meines Hauses! — Mit Thyesten
Geht Atreus in vertraulichen Gesprächen, 1275
Die Knaben schlüpfen scherzend um sie her.
Ist keine Feindschaft hier mehr unter euch?
Verlosch die Rache wie das Licht der Sonne?
So bin auch ich willkommen, und ich darf
In euern feierlichen Zug mich mischen. 1280
Willkommen, Väter! euch grüßt Orest,
Von euerm Stamme der letzte Mann;
Was ihr gesät, hat er geerntet:
Mit Fluch beladen stieg er herab.
Doch leichter träget sich hier jede Bürde: 1285
Nehmt ihn, o nehmt ihn in euern Kreis! —
Dich, Atreus, ehr' ich, auch dich, Thyesten;
Wir sind hier alle der Feindschaft los. —
Zeigt mir den Vater, den ich nur einmal
Im Leben sah! — Bist du's, mein Vater? 1290
Und führst die Mutter vertraut mit dir?
Darf Klytämnestra die Hand dir reichen,
So darf Orest auch zu ihr treten
Und darf ihr sagen: Sieh deinen Sohn! —
Seht euern Sohn! Heißt ihn willkommen. 1295
Auf Erden war in unserm Hause
Der Gruß des Mordes gewisse Losung,

Und das Geschlecht des alten Tantalus
Hat seine Freuden jenseits der Nacht.
Ihr ruft: Willkommen! und nehmt mich auf. 1300
O führt zum Alten, zum Ahnherrn mich!
Wo ist der Alte? Daß ich ihn sehe,
Das teure Haupt, das vielverehrte,
Das mit den Göttern zu Rate saß.
Ihr scheint zu zaudern, euch wegzuwenden? 1305
Was ist es? Leidet der Göttergleiche?
Weh mir! es haben die Übermächt'gen
Der Heldenbrust grausame Qualen
Mit ehrnen Ketten fest aufgeschmiedet.

Dritter Auftritt.

Orest. Iphigenie. Pylades.

Orest.

Seid ihr auch schon herabgekommen? 1310
Wohl, Schwester, dir! Noch fehlt Elektra:
Ein güt'ger Gott send' uns die eine
Mit sanften Pfeilen auch schnell herab.
Dich, armer Freund, muß ich bedauern!
Komm mit, komm mit, zu Plutos Thron, 1315
Als neue Gäste den Wirt zu grüßen!

Iphigenie.

Geschwister, die ihr an dem weiten Himmel
Das schöne Licht bei Tag und Nacht herauf
Den Menschen bringet und den Abgeschiednen
Nicht leuchten dürfet, rettet uns Geschwister! 1320
Du liebst, Diane, deinen holden Bruder

Vor allem, was dir Erd' und Himmel bietet,
Und wendest dein jungfräulich Angesicht
Nach seinem ew'gen Lichte sehnend still.
O, laß den Einz'gen, Spätgefundnen mir 1325
Nicht in der Finsternis des Wahnsinns rasen!
Und ist dein Wille, da du hier mich bargst,
Nunmehr vollendet, willst du mir durch ihn
Und ihm durch mich die sel'ge Hilfe geben:
So lös' ihn von den Banden jenes Fluchs, 1330
Daß nicht die teure Zeit der Rettung schwinde.

Pylades.

Erkennst du uns und diesen heil'gen Hain
Und dieses Licht, das nicht den Toten leuchtet?
Fühlst du den Arm des Freundes und der Schwester,
Die dich noch fest, noch lebend halten? Faß 1335
Uns kräftig an; wir sind nicht leere Schatten.
Merk' auf mein Wort! Vernimm es! Raffe dich
Zusammen! Jeder Augenblick ist teuer,
Und unsre Rückkehr hängt an zarten Fäden,
Die, scheint es, eine günst'ge Parze spinnt. 1340

Orest (zu Iphigenien).

Laß mich zum erstenmal mit freiem Herzen
In deinen Armen reine Freude haben!
Ihr Götter, die mit flammender Gewalt
Ihr schwere Wolken aufzuzehren wandelt
Und gnädig-ernst den lang erflehten Regen 1345
Mit Donnerstimmen und mit Windesbrausen
In wilden Strömen auf die Erde schüttet;
Doch bald der Menschen grausendes Erwarten
In Segen auflöst und das bange Staunen

In Freudeblick und lauten Dank verwandelt, 1350
Wenn in den Tropfen frischerquickter Blätter
Die neue Sonne tausendfach sich spiegelt,
Und Iris freundlich bunt mit leichter Hand
Den grauen Flor der letzten Wolken trennt:
O laßt mich auch in meiner Schwester Armen, 1355
An meines Freundes Brust, was ihr mir gönnt,
Mit vollem Dank genießen und behalten!
Es löset sich der Fluch, mir sagt's das Herz.
Die Eumeniden ziehn, ich höre sie,
Zum Tartarus und schlagen hinter sich 1360
Die ehrnen Tore fernabdonnernd zu.
Die Erde dampft erquickenden Geruch
Und ladet mich auf ihren Flächen ein,
Nach Lebensfreud' und großer Tat zu jagen.

Pylades.

Versäumt die Zeit nicht, die gemessen ist! 1365
Der Wind, der unsre Segel schwellt, er bringe
Erst unsre volle Freude zum Olymp.
Kommt! Es bedarf hier schnellen Rat und Schluß.

Vierter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Iphigenie.

Denken die Himmlischen
Einem der Erdgebornen 1370
Viele Verwirrungen zu
Und bereiten sie ihm

Von der Freude zu Schmerzen
Und von Schmerzen zur Freude
Tieferschütternden Übergang: 1375
Dann erziehen sie ihm
In der Nähe der Stadt
Oder am fernen Gestade,
Daß in Stunden der Not
Auch die Hilfe bereit sei, 1380
Einen ruhigen Freund.
O segnet, Götter, unsern Pylades
Und was er immer unternehmen mag!
Er ist der Arm des Jünglings in der Schlacht,
Des Greises leuchtend Aug' in der Versammlung; 1385
Denn seine Seel' ist stille; sie bewahrt
Der Ruhe heil'ges unerschöpftes Gut,
Und den Umhergetriebnen reichet er
Aus ihren Tiefen Rat und Hilfe. Mich
Riß er vom Bruder los; den staunt' ich an 1390
Und immer wieder an und konnte mir
Das Glück nicht eigen machen, ließ ihn nicht
Aus meinen Armen los und fühlte nicht
Die Nähe der Gefahr, die uns umgibt.
Jetzt gehn sie, ihren Anschlag auszuführen, 1395
Der See zu, wo das Schiff mit den Gefährten,
In einer Bucht versteckt, aufs Zeichen lauert,
Und haben kluges Wort mir in den Mund
Gegeben, mich gelehrt, was ich dem König
Antworte, wenn er sendet und das Opfer 1400
Mir dringender gebietet. Ach! ich sehe wohl,
Ich muß mich leiten lassen wie ein Kind.
Ich habe nicht gelernt zu hinterhalten

Noch jemand etwas abzulisten. Weh!
O weh der Lüge! Sie befreiet nicht, 1405
Wie jedes andre wahrgesprochne Wort,
Die Brust; sie macht uns nicht getrost, sie ängstet
Den, der sie heimlich schmiedet, und sie kehrt,
Ein losgedruckter Pfeil, von einem Gotte
Gewendet und versagend, sich zurück 1410
Und trifft den Schützen. Sorg' auf Sorge schwankt
Mir durch die Brust. Es greift die Furie
Vielleicht den Bruder auf dem Boden wieder
Des ungeweihten Ufers grimmig an.
Entdeckt man sie vielleicht? Mich dünkt, ich höre 1415
Gewaffnete sich nahen! — Hier! — Der Bote
Kommt von dem Könige mit schnellem Schritt.
Es schlägt mein Herz, es trübt sich meine Seele,
Da ich des Mannes Angesicht erblicke,
Dem ich mit falschem Wort begegnen soll. 1420

Zweiter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Arkas.

Arkas.

Beschleunige das Opfer, Priesterin!
Der König wartet, und es harrt das Volk.

Iphigenie.

Ich folgte meiner Pflicht und deinem Wink,
Wenn unvermutet nicht ein Hindernis
Sich zwischen mich und die Erfüllung stellte. 1425

Arkas.

Was ist's, das den Befehl des Königs hindert?

Iphigenie.

Der Zufall, dessen wir nicht Meister sind.

Arkas.

So sage mir's, daß ich's ihm schnell vermelde;
Denn er beschloß bei sich der beiden Tod.

Iphigenie.

Die Götter haben ihn noch nicht beschlossen. 1430
Der ält'ste dieser Männer trägt die Schuld
Des nahverwandten Bluts, das er vergoß.
Die Furien verfolgen seinen Pfad,
Ja, in dem innern Tempel faßte selbst
Das Übel ihn, und seine Gegenwart 1435
Entheiligte die reine Stätte. Nun
Eil' ich mit meinen Jungfraun, an dem Meere
Der Göttin Bild mit frischer Welle netzend,
Geheimnisvolle Weihe zu begehn.
Es störe niemand unsern stillen Zug! 1440

Arkas.

Ich melde dieses neue Hindernis
Dem Könige geschwind; beginne du
Das heil'ge Werk nicht eh', bis er's erlaubt.

Iphigenie.

Dies ist allein der Priest'rin überlassen.

Arkas.

Solch seltnen Fall soll auch der König wissen. 1445

Iphigenie.

Sein Rat wie sein Befehl verändert nichts.

Arkas.

Oft wird der Mächtige zum Schein gefragt.

Iphigenie.

Erdringe nicht, was ich versagen sollte.

Arkas.

Versage nicht, was gut und nützlich ist.

Iphigenie.

Ich gebe nach, wenn du nicht säumen willst. 1450

Arkas.

Schnell bin ich mit der Nachricht in dem Lager
Und schnell mit seinen Worten hier zurück.
O, könnt' ich ihm noch eine Botschaft bringen,
Die alles löste, was uns jetzt verwirrt:
Denn du hast nicht des Treuen Rat geachtet. 1455

Iphigenie.

Was ich vermochte, hab' ich gern getan.

Arkas.

Noch änderst du den Sinn zur rechten Zeit.

Iphigenie.

Das steht nun einmal nicht in unsrer Macht.

Arkas.

Du hältst unmöglich, was dir Mühe kostet.

Iphigenie.

Dir scheint es möglich, weil der Wunsch dich trügt. 1460

Arkas.

Willst du denn alles so gelassen wagen?

Iphigenie.

Ich hab' es in der Götter Hand gelegt.

Arkas.

Sie pflegen Menschen menschlich zu erretten.

Iphigenie.

Auf ihren Fingerzeig kömmt alles an.

Arkas.

Ich sage dir, es liegt in deiner Hand. 1465
Des Königs aufgebrachter Sinn allein
Bereitet diesen Fremden bittern Tod.
Das Heer entwöhnte längst vom harten Opfer
Und von dem blut'gen Dienste sein Gemüt.
Ja, mancher, den ein widriges Geschick 1470
An fremdes Ufer trug, empfand es selbst,
Wie göttergleich dem armen Irrenden,
Umhergetrieben an der fremden Grenze,
Ein freundlich Menschenangesicht begegnet.
O, wende nicht von uns, was du vermagst! 1475
Du endest leicht, was du begonnen hast:
Denn nirgends baut die Milde, die herab
In menschlicher Gestalt vom Himmel kommt,
Ein Reich sich schneller, als wo trüb und wild
Ein neues Volk, voll Leben, Mut und Kraft, 1480
Sich selbst und banger Ahnung überlassen,
Des Menschenlebens schwere Bürden trägt.

Iphigenie.

Erschüttre meine Seele nicht, die du
Nach deinem Willen nicht bewegen kannst.

Arkas.

So lang' es Zeit ist, schont man weder Mühe 1485
Noch eines guten Wortes Wiederholung.

Iphigenie.

Du machst dir Müh' und mir erregst du Schmerzen;
Vergebens beides: darum laß mich nun.

Arkas.

Die Schmerzen sind's, die ich zu Hilfe rufe:
Denn es sind Freunde, Gutes raten sie. 1490

Iphigenie.

Sie fassen meine Seele mit Gewalt,
Doch tilgen sie den Widerwillen nicht.

Arkas.

Fühlt eine schöne Seele Widerwillen
Für eine Wohltat, die der Edle reicht?

Iphigenie.

Ja, wenn der Edle, was sich nicht geziemt, 1495
Statt meines Dankes mich erwerben will.

Arkas.

Wer keine Neigung fühlt, dem mangelt es
An einem Worte der Entschuld'gung nie.
Dem Fürsten sag' ich an, was hier geschehn.
O wiederholtest du in deiner Seele, 1500
Wie edel er sich gegen dich betrug
Von deiner Ankunft an bis diesen Tag!

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie allein.

Von dieses Mannes Rede fühl' ich mir
Zur ungelegnen Zeit das Herz im Busen
Auf einmal umgewendet. Ich erschrecke! — 1505
Denn wie die Flut mit schnellen Strömen wachsend
Die Felsen überspült, die in dem Sand
Am Ufer liegen: so bedeckte ganz
Ein Freudenstrom mein Innerstes. Ich hielt

In meinen Armen das Unmögliche. 1510
Es schien sich eine Wolke wieder sanft
Um mich zu legen, von der Erde mich
Empor zu heben und in jenen Schlummer
Mich einzuwiegen, den die gute Göttin
Um meine Schläfe legte, da ihr Arm 1515
Mich rettend faßte. — Meinen Bruder
Ergriff das Herz mit einziger Gewalt:
Ich horchte nur auf seines Freundes Rat;
Nur sie zu retten drang die Seele vorwärts.
Und wie den Klippen einer wüsten Insel 1520
Der Schiffer gern den Rücken wendet: so
Lag Tauris hinter mir. Nun hat die Stimme
Des treuen Manns mich wieder aufgeweckt,
Daß ich auch Menschen hier verlasse, mich
Erinnert. Doppelt wird mir der Betrug 1525
Verhaßt. O bleibe ruhig, meine Seele!
Beginnst du nun zu schwanken und zu zweifeln?
Den festen Boden deiner Einsamkeit
Mußt du verlassen! Wieder eingeschifft,
Ergreifen dich die Wellen schaukelnd, trüb 1530
Und bang verkennest du die Welt und dich.

Vierter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Pylades.

Pylades.

Wo ist sie? daß ich ihr mit schnellen Worten
Die frohe Botschaft unsrer Rettung bringe!

Iphigenie.

Du siehst mich hier voll Sorgen und Erwartung
Des sichern Trostes, den du mir versprichst. 1535

Pylades.

Dein Bruder ist geheilt! Den Felsenboden
Des ungeweihten Ufers und den Sand
Betraten wir mit fröhlichen Gesprächen;
Der Hain blieb hinter uns, wir merkten's nicht.
Und herrlicher und immer herrlicher 1540
Umloderte der Jugend schöne Flamme
Sein lockig Haupt; sein volles Auge glühte
Von Mut und Hoffnung, und sein freies Herz
Ergab sich ganz der Freude, ganz der Lust,
Dich, seine Retterin, und mich zu retten. 1545

Iphigenie.

Gesegnet seist du, und es möge nie
Von deiner Lippe, die so Gutes sprach,
Der Ton des Leidens und der Klage tönen!

Pylades.

Ich bringe mehr als das; denn schön begleitet,
Gleich einem Fürsten, pflegt das Glück zu nahn. 1550
Auch die Gefährten haben wir gefunden.
In einer Felsenbucht verbargen sie
Das Schiff und saßen traurig und erwartend.
Sie sahen deinen Bruder, und es regten
Sich alle jauchzend, und sie baten dringend, 1555
Der Abfahrt Stunde zu beschleunigen.
Es sehnet jede Faust sich nach dem Ruder,
Und selbst ein Wind erhob vom Lande lispelnd,
Von allen gleich bemerkt, die holden Schwingen.

Drum laß uns eilen, führe mich zum Tempel, 1560
Laß mich das Heiligtum betreten, laß
Mich unsrer Wünsche Ziel verehrend fassen!
Ich bin allein genug, der Göttin Bild
Auf wohlgeübten Schultern wegzutragen;
Wie sehn' ich mich nach der erwünschten Last! 1565

(Er geht gegen den Tempel unter den letzten Worten, ohne zu bemerken, daß Iphigenie nicht folgt; endlich kehrt er sich um.)

Du stehst und zauderst — sage mir — du schweigst!
Du scheinst verworren! Widersetzet sich
Ein neues Unheil unserm Glück? Sag' an!
Hast du dem Könige das kluge Wort
Vermelden lassen, das wir abgeredet? 1570

Iphigenie

Ich habe, teurer Mann; doch wirst du schelten.
Ein schweigender Verweis war mir dein Anblick.
Des Königs Bote kam, und wie du es
Mir in den Mund gelegt, so sagt' ich's ihm.
Er schien zu staunen und verlangte dringend, 1575
Die seltne Feier erst dem Könige
Zu melden, seinen Willen zu vernehmen;
Und nun erwart' ich seine Wiederkehr.

Pylades.

Weh uns! Erneuert schwebt nun die Gefahr
Um unsre Schläfe! Warum hast du nicht 1580
Ins Priesterrecht dich weislich eingehüllt?

Iphigenie.

Als eine Hülle hab' ich's nie gebraucht.

Pylades.

So wirst du, reine Seele, dich und uns
Zu Grunde richten. Warum dacht' ich nicht
Auf diesen Fall voraus und lehrte dich 1585
Auch dieser Fordrung auszuweichen!

Iphigenie.

Schilt
Nur mich, die Schuld ist mein, ich fühl es wohl;
Doch konnt' ich anders nicht dem Mann begegnen,
Der mit Vernunft und Ernst von mir verlangte,
Was ihm mein Herz als Recht gestehen mußte. 1590

Pylades.

Gefährlicher zieht sich's zusammen; doch auch so
Laß uns nicht zagen oder unbesonnen
Und übereilt uns selbst verraten. Ruhig
Erwarte du die Wiederkunft des Boten
Und dann steh fest, er bringe, was er will:
Denn solcher Weihung Feier anzuordnen 1595
Gehört der Priesterin und nicht dem König.
Und fordert er, den fremden Mann zu sehn,
Der von dem Wahnsinn schwer belastet ist,
So lehn' es ab, als hieltest du uns beide 1600
Im Tempel wohl verwahrt. So schaff' uns Luft,
Daß wir aufs eiligste, den heil'gen Schatz
Dem rauh unwürd'gen Volk entwendend, fliehn.
Die besten Zeichen sendet uns Apoll,
Und eh' wir die Bedingung fromm erfüllen, 1605
Erfüllt er göttlich sein Versprechen schon.
Orest ist frei, geheilt! — Mit dem Befreiten,
O führet uns hinüber, günst'ge Winde,
Zur Felseninsel, die der Gott bewohnt;

Dann nach Mycen, daß es lebendig werde, 1610
Daß von der Asche des verloschnen Herdes
Die Vatergötter fröhlich sich erheben
Und schönes Feuer ihre Wohnungen
Umleuchte! Deine Hand soll ihnen Weihrauch
Zuerst aus goldnen Schalen streuen. Du 1615
Bringst über jene Schwelle Heil und Leben wieder,
Entsühnst den Fluch und schmückest neu die Deinen
Mit frischen Lebensblüten herrlich aus.

Iphigenie.

Vernehm' ich dich, so wendet sich, o Teurer,
Wie sich die Blume nach der Sonne wendet, 1620
Die Seele, von dem Strahle deiner Worte
Getroffen, sich dem süßen Troste nach.
Wie köstlich ist des gegenwärt'gen Freundes
Gewisse Rede, deren Himmelskraft
Ein Einsamer entbehrt und still versinkt. 1625
Denn langsam reift, verschlossen in dem Busen,
Gedank' ihm und Entschluß; die Gegenwart
Des Liebenden entwickelte sie leicht.

Pylades.

Leb' wohl! Die Freunde will ich nun geschwind
Beruhigen, die sehnlich wartend harren. 1630
Dann komm' ich schnell zurück und lausche hier
Im Felsenbusch versteckt auf deinen Wink —
Was sinnest du? Auf einmal überschwebt
Ein stiller Trauerzug die freie Stirne.

Iphigenie.

Verzeih! Wie leichte Wolken vor der Sonne, 1635
So zieht mir vor der Seele leichte Sorge
Und Bangigkeit vorüber.

Pylades.

Fürchte nicht!
Betrüglich schloß die Furcht mit der Gefahr
Ein enges Bündnis; beide sind Gesellen.

Iphigenie.

Die Sorge nenn' ich edel, die mich warnt, 1640
Den König, der mein zweiter Vater ward,
Nicht tückisch zu betrügen, zu berauben.

Pylades.

Der deinen Bruder schlachtet, dem entfliehst du.

Iphigenie.

Es ist derselbe, der mir Gutes tat.

Pylades.

Das ist nicht Undank, was die Not gebeut. 1645

Iphigenie.

Es bleibt wohl Undank; nur die Not entschuldigt's.

Pylades.

Vor Göttern und vor Menschen dich gewiß.

Iphigenie.

Allein mein eigen Herz ist nicht befriedigt.

Pylades.

Zu strenge Fordrung ist verborgner Stolz.

Iphigenie.

Ich untersuche nicht, ich fühle nur. 1650

Pylades.

Fühlst du dich recht, so mußt du dich verehren.

Iphigenie.

Ganz unbefleckt genießt sich nur das Herz.

Pylades.

So hast du dich im Tempel wohl bewahrt;
Das Leben lehrt uns, weniger mit uns
Und andern strenge sein; du lernst es auch. 1655
So wunderbar ist dies Geschlecht gebildet,
So vielfach ist's verschlungen und verknüpft,
Daß keiner in sich selbst, noch mit den andern
Sich rein und unverworren halten kann.
Auch sind wir nicht bestellt, uns selbst zu richten. 1660
Zu wandeln und auf seinen Weg zu sehen,
Ist eines Menschen erste, nächste Pflicht;
Denn selten schätzt er recht, was er getan,
Und was er tut, weiß er fast nie zu schätzen.

Iphigenie.

Fast überred'st du mich zu deiner Meinung. 1665

Pylades.

Braucht's Überredung, wo die Wahl versagt ist?
Den Bruder, dich und einen Freund zu retten,
Ist nur ein Weg; fragt sich's ob wir ihn gehn?

Iphigenie.

O laß mich zaudern! denn du tätest selbst
Ein solches Unrecht keinem Mann gelassen, 1670
Dem du für Wohltat dich verpflichtet hieltest.

Pylades.

Wenn wir zu grunde gehen, wartet dein
Ein härtrer Vorwurf, der Verzweiflung trägt.
Man sieht, du bist nicht an Verlust gewohnt,
Da du, dem großen Übel zu entgehen, 1675
Ein falsches Wort nicht einmal opfern willst.

Iphigenie.

O, trüg' ich doch ein männlich Herz in mir,
Das, wenn es einen kühnen Vorsatz hegt,
Vor jeder andern Stimme sich verschließt!

Pylades.

Du weigerst dich umsonst; die ehrne Hand 1680
Der Not gebietet, und ihr ernster Wink
Ist oberstes Gesetz, dem Götter selbst
Sich unterwerfen müssen. Schweigend herrscht
Des ew'gen Schicksals unberatne Schwester.
Was sie dir auferlegt, das trage; tu, 1685
Was sie gebeut. Das andre weißt du. Bald
Komm' ich zurück, aus deiner heil'gen Hand
Der Rettung schönes Siegel zu empfangen.

Fünfter Auftritt.

Iphigenie allein.

Ich muß ihm folgen; denn die Meinigen
Seh' ich in dringender Gefahr. Doch, ach! 1690
Mein eigen Schicksal macht mir bang und bänger.
O soll ich nicht die stille Hoffnung retten,
Die in der Einsamkeit ich schön genährt?
Soll dieser Fluch denn ewig walten? Soll
Nie dies Geschlecht mit einem neuen Segen 1695
Sich wieder heben? — Nimmt doch alles ab!
Das beste Glück, des Lebens schönste Kraft
Ermattet endlich! Warum nicht der Fluch?
So hofft' ich denn vergebens, hier verwahrt,
Von meines Hauses Schicksal abgeschieden, 1700

Dereinst mit reiner Hand und reinem Herzen
Die schwer befleckte Wohnung zu entsühnen!
Kaum wird in meinen Armen mir ein Bruder
Vom grimm'gen Übel wundervoll und schnell
Geheilt, kaum naht ein lang erflehtes Schiff, 1705
Mich in den Port der Vaterwelt zu leiten,
So legt die taube Not ein doppelt Laster
Mit ehrner Hand mir auf: das heilige,
Mir anvertraute, vielverehrte Bild
Zu rauben und den Mann zu hintergehn, 1710
Dem ich mein Leben und mein Schicksal danke.
O daß in meinem Busen nicht zuletzt
Ein Widerwille keime! der Titanen,
Der alten Götter tiefer Haß auf euch,
Olympier, nicht auch die zarte Brust 1715
Mit Geierklauen fasse! Rettet mich
Und rettet euer Bild in meiner Seele!
Vor meinen Ohren tönt das alte Lied —
Vergessen hatt' ich's und vergaß es gern —
Das Lied der Parzen, das sie grausend sangen, 1720
Als Tantalus vom goldnen Stuhle fiel;
Sie litten mit dem edeln Freunde; grimmig
War ihre Brust und furchtbar ihr Gesang.
In unsrer Jugend sang's die Amme mir
Und den Geschwistern vor, ich merkt' es wohl. 1725

Es fürchte die Götter
Das Menschengeschlecht!
Sie halten die Herrschaft
In ewigen Händen
Und können sie brauchen, 1730
Wie's ihnen gefällt.

Der fürchte sie doppelt,
Den je sie erheben!
Auf Klippen und Wolken
Sind Stühle bereitet 1735
Um goldene Tische.
Erhebet ein Zwist sich:
So stürzen die Gäste,
Geschmäht und geschändet,
In nächtliche Tiefen 1740
Und harren vergebens,
Im Finstern gebunden,
Gerechten Gerichtes.
Sie aber, sie bleiben
In ewigen Festen 1745
An goldenen Tischen.
Sie schreiten vom Berge
Zu Bergen hinüber;
Aus Schlünden der Tiefe
Dampft ihnen der Atem 1750
Erstickter Titanen,
Gleich Opfergerüchen,
Ein leichtes Gewölke.
Es wenden die Herrscher
Ihr segnendes Auge 1755
Von ganzen Geschlechtern
Und meiden, im Enkel
Die ehmals geliebten,
Still redenden Züge
Des Ahnherrn zu sehn. 1760
So sangen die Parzen;
Es horcht der Verbannte

In nächtlichen Höhlen,
Der Alte, die Lieder,
Denkt Kinder und Enkel 1765
Und schüttelt das Haupt.

Fünfter Aufzug.

Erster Auftritt.

Thoas. Arkas.

Arkas.

Verwirrt muß ich gestehn, daß ich nicht weiß,
Wohin ich meinen Argwohn richten soll.
Sind's die Gefangnen, die auf ihre Flucht
Verstohlen sinnen? Ist's die Priesterin, 1770
Die ihnen hilft? Es mehrt sich das Gerücht,
Das Schiff, das diese beiden hergebracht,
Sei irgend noch in einer Bucht versteckt.
Und jenes Mannes Wahnsinn, diese Weihe,
Der heil'ge Vorwand dieser Zög'rung, rufen 1775
Den Argwohn lauter und die Vorsicht auf.

Thoas.

Es komme schnell die Priesterin herbei!
Dann geht, durchsucht das Ufer scharf und schnell
Vom Vorgebirge bis zum Hain der Göttin.
Verschonet seine heil'gen Tiefen, legt 1780
Bedächt'gen Hinterhalt und greift sie an;
Wo ihr sie findet, faßt sie, wie ihr pflegt.

Zweiter Auftritt.

Thoas allein.

Entsetzlich wechselt mir der Grimm im Busen,
Erst gegen sie, die ich so heilig hielt,
Dann gegen mich, der ich sie zum Verrat 1785
Durch Nachsicht und durch Güte bildete.
Zur Sklaverei gewöhnt der Mensch sich gut
Und lernet leicht gehorchen, wenn man ihn
Der Freiheit ganz beraubt. Ja, wäre sie
In meiner Ahnherrn rohe Hand gefallen, 1790
Und hätte sie der heil'ge Grimm verschont:
Sie wäre froh gewesen, sich allein
Zu retten, hätte dankbar ihr Geschick
Erkannt und fremdes Blut vor dem Altar
Vergossen, hätte Pflicht genannt, 1795
Was Not war. Nun lockt meine Güte
In ihrer Brust verwegnen Wunsch herauf.
Vergebens hofft' ich, sie mir zu verbinden;
Sie sinnt sich nur ein eigen Schicksal aus.
Durch Schmeichelei gewann sie mir das Herz; 1800
Nun widersteh' ich der: so sucht sie sich
Den Weg durch List und Trug, und meine Güte
Scheint ihr ein altverjährtes Eigentum.

Dritter Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas.

Iphigenie.

Du forderst mich? Was bringt dich zu uns her?

Thoas.

Du schiebst das Opfer auf; sag' an, warum? 1805

Iphigenie.

Ich hab' an Arkas alles klar erzählt.

Thoas.

Von dir möcht' ich es weiter noch vernehmen.

Iphigenie.

Die Göttin gibt dir Frist zur Überlegung.

Thoas.

Sie scheint dir selbst gelegen, diese Frist.

Iphigenie.

Wenn dir das Herz zum grausamen Entschluß 1810
Verhärtet ist: so solltest du nicht kommen!
Ein König, der Unmenschliches verlangt,
Find't Diener g'nug, die gegen Gnad' und Lohn
Den halben Fluch der Tat begierig fassen;
Doch seine Gegenwart bleibt unbefleckt. 1815
Er sinnt den Tod in einer schweren Wolke,
Und seine Boten bringen flammendes
Verderben auf des Armen Haupt hinab;
Er aber schwebt durch seine Höhen ruhig,
Ein unerreichter Gott, im Sturme fort. 1820

Thoas.

Die heil'ge Lippe tönt ein wildes Lied.

Iphigenie.

Nicht Priesterin, nur Agamemnons Tochter.
Der Unbekannten Wort verehrtest du,
Der Fürstin willst du rasch gebieten? Nein!
Von Jugend auf hab' ich gelernt gehorchen, 1825
Erst meinen Eltern und dann einer Gottheit,
Und folgsam fühlt' ich immer meine Seele

Am schönsten frei; allein dem harten Worte,
Dem rauhen Ausspruch eines Mannes mich
Zu fügen, lernt' ich weder dort noch hier. 1830

Thoas.

Ein alt Gesetz, nicht ich, gebietet dir.

Iphigenie.

Wir fassen ein Gesetz begierig an,
Das unsrer Leidenschaft zur Waffe dient.
Ein andres spricht zu mir, ein älteres, 1835
Mich dir zu widersetzen, das Gebot,
Dem jeder Fremde heilig ist.

Thoas.

Es scheinen die Gefangnen dir sehr nah
Am Herzen; denn vor Anteil und Bewegung
Vergissest du der Klugheit erstes Wort,
Daß man den Mächtigen nicht reizen soll. 1840

Iphigenie.

Red' oder schweig' ich, immer kannst du wissen,
Was mir im Herzen ist und immer bleibt.
Löst die Erinnerung des gleichen Schicksals
Nicht ein verschloßnes Herz zum Mitleid auf?
Wie mehr denn meins! In ihnen seh' ich mich. 1845
Ich habe vorm Altare selbst gezittert,
Und feierlich umgab der frühe Tod
Die Knieende; das Messer zuckte schon,
Den lebenvollen Busen zu durchbohren;
Mein Innerstes entsetzte wirbelnd sich, 1850
Mein Auge brach, und — ich fand mich gerettet.

Sind wir, was Götter gnädig uns gewährt,
Unglücklichen nicht zu erstatten schuldig?
Du weißt es, kennst mich, und du willst mich zwingen!

Thoas.

Gehorche deinem Dienste, nicht dem Herrn. 1855

Iphigenie.

Laß ab! beschönige nicht die Gewalt,
Die sich der Schwachheit eines Weibes freut.
Ich bin so frei geboren als ein Mann.
Stünd' Agamemnons Sohn dir gegenüber,
Und du verlangtest, was sich nicht gebührt, 1860
So hat auch er ein Schwert und einen Arm,
Die Rechte seines Busens zu verteid'gen.
Ich habe nichts als Worte, und es ziemt
Dem edlen Mann, der Frauen Wort zu achten.

Thoas.

Ich acht' es mehr als eines Bruders Schwert. 1865

Iphigenie.

Das Los der Waffen wechselt hin und her;
Kein kluger Streiter hält den Feind gering.
Auch ohne Hilfe gegen Trutz und Härte
Hat die Natur den Schwachen nicht gelassen:
Sie gab zur List ihm Freude, lehrt' ihn Künste; 1870
Bald weicht er aus, verspätet und umgeht.
Ja, der Gewaltige verdient, daß man sie übt.

Thoas.

Die Vorsicht stellt der List sich klug entgegen.

Iphigenie.

Und eine reine Seele braucht sie nicht.

Thoas.

Sprich unbehutsam nicht dein eigen Urteil. 1875

Iphigenie.

O sähest du, wie meine Seele kämpft,
Ein bös Geschick, das sie ergreifen will,
Im ersten Anfall mutig abzutreiben!
So steh' ich denn hier wehrlos gegen dich?
Die schöne Bitte, den anmut'gen Zweig, 1880
In einer Frauen Hand gewaltiger
Als Schwert und Waffe, stößest du zurück:
Was bleibt mir nun, mein Innres zu verteid'gen?
Ruf' ich die Göttin um ein Wunder an?
Ist keine Kraft in meiner Seele Tiefen? 1885

Thoas.

Es scheint, der beiden Fremden Schicksal macht
Unmäßig dich besorgt. Wer sind sie? sprich!
Für die dein Geist gewaltig sich erhebt?

Iphigenie.

Sie sind — sie scheinen — für Griechen halt' ich sie.

Thoas.

Landsleute sind es? Und sie haben wohl 1890
Der Rückkehr schönes Bild in dir erneut?

Iphigenie (nach einigem Stillschweigen).

Hat denn zur unerhörten Tat der Mann
Allein das Recht? Drückt denn Unmögliches
Nur er an die gewalt'ge Heldenbrust?
Was nennt man groß? Was hebt die Seele schaudernd 1895
Dem immer wiederholenden Erzähler,
Als was mit unwahrscheinlichem Erfolg
Der Mutigste begann? Der in der Nacht

Allein das Heer des Feindes überschleicht,
Wie unversehen eine Flamme wütend 1900
Die Schlafenden, Erwachenden ergreift,
Zuletzt, gedrängt von den Ermunterten,
Auf Feindes Pferden, doch mit Beute kehrt,
Wird der allein gepriesen? der allein,
Der, einen sichern Weg verachtend, kühn 1905
Gebirg' und Wälder durchzustreifen geht,
Daß er von Räubern eine Gegend säubre?
Ist uns nichts übrig? Muß ein zartes Weib
Sich ihres angebornen Rechts entäußern,
Wild gegen Wilde sein, wie Amazonen 1910
Das Recht des Schwerts euch rauben und mit Blute
Die Unterdrückung rächen? Auf und ab
Steigt in der Brust ein kühnes Unternehmen:
Ich werde großem Vorwurf nicht entgehn,
Noch schwerem Übel, wenn es mir mißlingt; 1915
Allein euch leg' ich's auf die Kniee! Wenn
Ihr wahrhaft seid, wie ihr gepriesen werdet,
So zeigt's durch euern Beistand und verherrlicht
Durch mich die Wahrheit! — Ja, vernimm, o König,
Es wird ein heimlicher Betrug geschmiedet; 1920
Vergebens fragst du den Gefangnen nach;
Sie sind hinweg und suchen ihre Freunde,
Die mit dem Schiff am Ufer warten, auf.
Der ält'ste, den das Übel hier ergriffen
Und nun verlassen hat — es ist Orest, 1925
Mein Bruder, und der andre sein Vertrauter,
Sein Jugendfreund, mit Namen Pylades.
Apoll schickt sie von Delphi diesem Ufer
Mit göttlichen Befehlen zu, das Bild

Dianens wegzurauben und zu ihm 1930
Die Schwester hinzubringen, und dafür
Verspricht er dem von Furien Verfolgten,
Des Mutterblutes Schuldigen, Befreiung.
Uns beide hab' ich nun, die Überbliebnen
Von Tantals Haus, in deine Hand gelegt: 1935
Verdirb uns — wenn du darfst.

Thoas.

Du glaubst, es höre
Der rohe Scythe, der Barbar, die Stimme
Der Wahrheit und der Menschlichkeit, die Atreus,
Der Grieche, nicht vernahm?

Iphigenie.

Es hört sie jeder,
Geboren unter jedem Himmel, dem 1940
Des Lebens Quelle durch den Busen rein
Und ungehindert fließt. — Was sinnst du mir,
O König, schweigend in der tiefen Seele?
Ist es Verderben? So töte mich zuerst!
Denn nun empfind' ich, da uns keine Rettung 1945
Mehr übrig bleibt, die gräßliche Gefahr,
Worein ich die Geliebten übereilt
Vorsätzlich stürzte. Weh! ich werde sie
Gebunden vor mir sehn! Mit welchen Blicken
Kann ich von meinem Bruder Abschied nehmen, 1950
Den ich ermorde? Nimmer kann ich ihm
Mehr in die vielgeliebten Augen schaun!

Thoas.

So haben die Betrüger künstlich-dichtend
Der lang Verschloßnen, ihre Wünsche leicht

Und willig Glaubenden ein solch Gespinst 1955
Ums Haupt geworfen!

Iphigenie.

Nein! o König, nein!
Ich könnte hintergangen werden; diese
Sind treu und wahr. Wirst du sie anders finden,
So laß sie fallen und verstoße mich,
Verbanne mich zur Strafe meiner Torheit 1960
An einer Klippeninsel traurig Ufer.
Ist aber dieser Mann der langerflehte,
Geliebte Bruder, so entlaß uns, sei
Auch den Geschwistern wie der Schwester freundlich.
Mein Vater fiel durch seiner Frauen Schuld 1965
Und sie durch ihren Sohn. Die letzte Hoffnung
Von Atreus' Stamme ruht auf ihm allein.
Laß mich mit reinem Herzen, reiner Hand
Hinübergehn und unser Haus entsühnen.
Du hältst mir Wort! — Wenn zu den Meinen je 1970
Mir Rückkehr zubereitet wäre, schwurst
Du, mich zu lassen; und sie ist es nun.
Ein König sagt nicht, wie gemeine Menschen,
Verlegen zu, daß er den Bittenden
Auf einen Augenblick entferne; noch 1975
Verspricht er auf den Fall, den er nicht hofft:
Dann fühlt er erst die Höhe seiner Würde,
Wenn er den Harrenden beglücken kann.

Thoas.

Unwillig, wie sich Feuer gegen Wasser
Im Kampfe wehrt und gischend seinen Feind 1980
Zu tilgen sucht, so wehret sich der Zorn
In meinem Busen gegen deine Worte.

Iphigenie.

O laß die Gnade, wie das heil'ge Licht
Der stillen Opferflamme, mir, umkränzt
Von Lobgesang und Dank und Freude, lodern. 1985

Thoas.

Wie oft besänftigte mich diese Stimme!

Iphigenie.

O reiche mir die Hand zum Friedenszeichen.

Thoas.

Du forderst viel in einer kurzen Zeit.

Iphigenie.

Um Gut's zu tun, braucht's keiner Überlegung.

Thoas.

Sehr viel! denn auch dem Guten folgt das Übel. 1990

Iphigenie.

Der Zweifel ist's, der Gutes böse macht.
Bedenke nicht; gewähre, wie du's fühlst.

Vierter Auftritt.

Orest gewaffnet. Die Vorigen.

Orest (nach der Szene gekehrt).

Verdoppelt eure Kräfte! Haltet sie
Zurück! Nur wenig Augenblicke! Weicht
Der Menge nicht und deckt den Weg zum Schiffe 1995
Mir und der Schwester!

(Zu Iphigenien, ohne den König zu sehen.)

Komm, wir sind verraten.
Geringer Raum bleibt uns zur Flucht. Geschwind!
(Er erblickt den König.)

Thoas (nach dem Schwerte greifend).

In meiner Gegenwart führt ungestraft
Kein Mann das nackte Schwert.

Iphigenie.

Entheiliget
Der Göttin Wohnung nicht durch Wut und Mord. 2000
Gebietet eurem Volke Stillstand, höret
Die Priesterin, die Schwester!

Orest.

Sage mir!
Wer ist es, der uns droht?

Iphigenie.

Verehr' in ihm
Den König, der mein zweiter Vater ward!
Verzeih mir, Bruder; doch mein kindlich Herz 2005
Hat unser ganz Geschick in seine Hand
Gelegt. Gestanden hab' ich euern Anschlag
Und meine Seele vom Verrat gerettet.

Orest.

Will er die Rückkehr friedlich uns gewähren?

Iphigenie.

Dein blinkend Schwert verbietet mir die Antwort. 2010

Orest (der das Schwert einsteckt).

So sprich! du siehst, ich horche deinen Worten.

Fünfter Auftritt.

Die Vorigen. Pylades. Bald nach ihm Arkas. Beide mit bloßen Schwertern.

Pylades.

Verweilet nicht! Die letzten Kräfte raffen
Die Unsrigen zusammen; weichend werden
Sie nach der See langsam zurückgedrängt.
Welch ein Gespräch der Fürsten find' ich hier! 2015
Dies ist des Königes verehrtes Haupt!

Arkas.

Gelassen, wie es dir, o König, ziemt,
Stehst du den Feinden gegenüber. Gleich
Ist die Verwegenheit bestraft; es weicht
Und fällt ihr Anhang, und ihr Schiff ist unser. 2020
Ein Wort von dir, so steht's in Flammen.

Thoas.

Geh!

Gebiete Stillstand meinem Volke! Keiner
Beschädige den Feind, so lang' wir reden.

(Arkas ab.)

Orest.

Ich nehm' es an. Geh, sammle, treuer Freund,
Den Rest des Volkes; harret still, welch Ende 2025
Die Götter unsern Taten zubereiten.

(Pylades ab.)

Sechster Auftritt.

Iphigenie. Thoas. Orest.

Iphigenie.

Befreit von Sorge mich, eh' ihr zu sprechen
Beginnet. Ich befürchte bösen Zwist,
Wenn du, o König, nicht der Billigkeit
Gelinde Stimme hörest, du, mein Bruder, 2030
Der raschen Jugend nicht gebieten willst.

Thoas.

Ich halte meinen Zorn, wie es dem Ältern
Geziemt, zurück. Antworte mir! Womit
Bezeugst du, daß du Agamemnons Sohn
Und dieser Bruder bist?

Orest.

Hier ist das Schwert, 2035
Mit dem er Trojas tapfre Männer schlug.
Dies nahm ich seinem Mörder ab und bat
Die Himmlischen, den Mut und Arm, das Glück
Des großen Königes mir zu verleihn
Und einen schönern Tod mir zu gewähren. 2040
Wähl' einen aus den Edeln deines Heers
Und stelle mir den Besten gegenüber.
So weit die Erde Heldensöhne nährt,
Ist keinem Fremdling dies Gesuch verweigert.

Thoas.

Dies Vorrecht hat die alte Sitte nie 2045
Dem Fremden hier gestattet.

Orest.

So beginne
Die neue Sitte denn von dir und mir!
Nachahmend heiliget ein ganzes Volk
Die edle Tat der Herrscher zum Gesetz.
Und laß mich nicht allein für unsre Freiheit, 2050
Laß mich, den Fremden, für die Fremden kämpfen!
Fall' ich, so ist ihr Urteil mit dem meinen
Gesprochen; aber gönnet mir das Glück,
Zu überwinden, so betrete nie
Ein Mann dies Ufer, dem der schnelle Blick 2055
Hilfreicher Liebe nicht begegnet, und
Getröstet scheide jeglicher hinweg!

Thoas.

Nicht unwert scheinest du, o Jüngling, mir
Der Ahnherrn, deren du dich rühmst, zu sein.
Groß ist die Zahl der edeln, tapfern Männer, 2060
Die mich begleiten; doch ich stehe selbst
In meinen Jahren noch dem Feinde, bin
Bereit, mit dir der Waffen Los zu wagen.

Iphigenie.

Mit nichten! Dieses blutigen Beweises
Bedarf es nicht, o König! Laßt die Hand 2065
Vom Schwerte! Denkt an mich und mein Geschick.
Der rasche Kampf verewigt einen Mann;
Er falle gleich, so preiset ihn das Lied.
Allein die Tränen, die unendlichen,
Der überbliebnen, der verlaßnen Frau 2070
Zählt keine Nachwelt, und der Dichter schweigt
Von tausend durchgeweinten Tag- und Nächten,

Wo eine stille Seele den verlornen,
Rasch abgeschiednen Freund vergebens sich
Zurückzurufen bangt und sich verzehrt. 2075
Mich selbst hat eine Sorge gleich gewarnt,
Daß der Betrug nicht eines Räubers mich
Vom sichern Schutzort reiße, mich der Knechtschaft
Verrate. Fleißig hab' ich sie befragt,
Nach jedem Umstand mich erkundigt, Zeichen 2080
Gefordert, und gewiß ist nun mein Herz.
Sieh hier an seiner rechten Hand das Mal
Wie von drei Sternen, das am Tage schon,
Da er geboren ward, sich zeigte, das
Auf schwere Tat, mit dieser Faust zu üben, 2085
Der Priester deutete. Dann überzeugt
Mich doppelt diese Schramme, die ihm hier
Die Augenbraue spaltet. Als ein Kind
Ließ ihn Elektra, rasch und unvorsichtig
Nach ihrer Art, aus ihren Armen stürzen. 2090
Er schlug auf einen Dreifuß auf — Er ist's —
Soll ich dir noch die Ähnlichkeit des Vaters,
Soll ich das innre Jauchzen meines Herzens
Dir auch als Zeugen der Versichrung nennen?

Thoas.

Und hübe deine Rede jeden Zweifel, 2095
Und bändigt' ich den Zorn in meiner Brust,
So würden doch die Waffen zwischen uns
Entscheiden müssen; Frieden seh' ich nicht.
Sie sind gekommen, du bekennest selbst,
Das heil'ge Bild der Göttin mir zu rauben. 2100
Glaubt ihr, ich sehe dies gelassen an?

Der Grieche wendet oft sein lüstern Auge
Den fernen Schätzen der Barbaren zu,
Dem goldnen Felle, Pferden, schönen Töchtern;
Doch führte sie Gewalt und List nicht immer 2105
Mit den erlangten Gütern glücklich heim.

Orest.

Das Bild, o König, soll uns nicht entzweien!
Jetzt kennen wir den Irrtum, den ein Gott
Wie einen Schleier um das Haupt uns legte,
Da er den Weg hierher uns wandern hieß. 2110
Um Rat und um Befreiung bat ich ihn
Von dem Geleit der Furien; er sprach:
„Bringst du die Schwester, die an Tauris' Ufer
Im Heiligtume wider Willen bleibt,
Nach Griechenland, so löset sich der Fluch." 2115
Wir legten's von Apollens Schwester aus,
Und er gedachte dich! Die strengen Bande
Sind nun gelöst; du bist den Deinen wieder,
Du Heilige, geschenkt. Von dir berührt,
War ich geheilt; in deinen Armen faßte 2120
Das Übel mich mit allen seinen Klauen
Zum letztenmal und schüttelte das Mark
Entsetzlich mir zusammen; dann entfloh's
Wie eine Schlange zu der Höhle. Neu
Genieß' ich nun durch dich das weite Licht 2125
Des Tages. Schön und herrlich zeigt sich mir
Der Göttin Rat. Gleich einem heil'gen Bilde,
Daran der Stadt unwandelbar Geschick
Durch ein geheimes Götterwort gebannt ist,
Nahm sie dich weg, die Schützerin des Hauses; 2130

Bewahrte dich in einer heil'gen Stille
Zum Segen deines Bruders und der Deinen.
Da alle Rettung auf der weiten Erde
Verloren schien, gibst du uns alles wieder.
Laß deine Seele sich zum Frieden wenden, 2135
O König! Hindre nicht, daß sie die Weihe
Des väterlichen Hauses nun vollbringe,
Mich der entsühnten Halle wiedergebe,
Mir auf das Haupt die alte Krone drücke!
Vergilt den Segen, den sie dir gebracht, 2140
Und laß des nähern Rechtes mich genießen!
Gewalt und List, der Männer höchster Ruhm,
Wird durch die Wahrheit dieser hohen Seele
Beschämt, und reines kindliches Vertrauen
Zu einem edeln Manne wird belohnt. 2145

Iphigenie.

Denk' an dein Wort und laß durch diese Rede
Aus einem graden treuen Munde dich
Bewegen! Sieh uns an! Du hast nicht oft
Zu solcher edeln Tat Gelegenheit.
Versagen kannst du's nicht; gewähr' es bald. 2150

Thoas.

So geht!

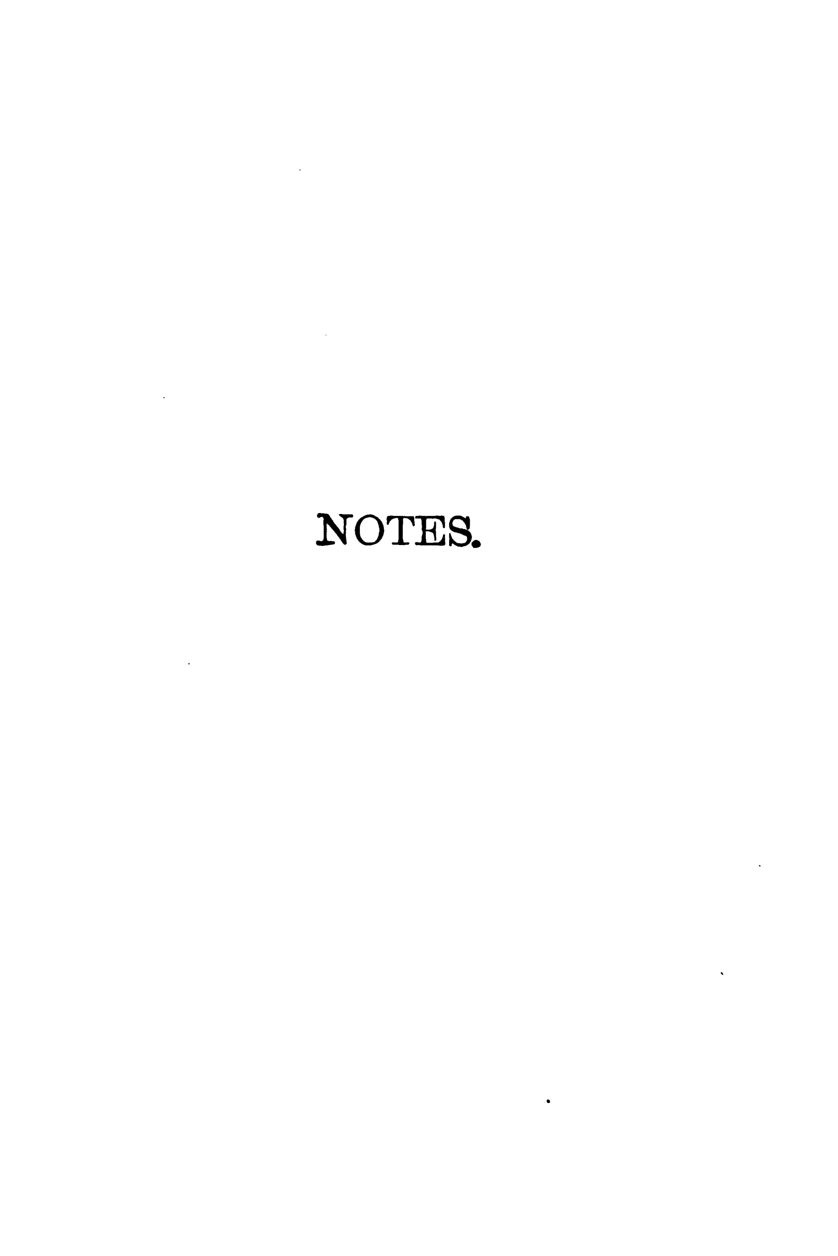
Iphigenie.

Nicht so, mein König! Ohne Segen,
In Widerwillen, scheid' ich nicht von dir.
Verbann' uns nicht! Ein freundlich Gastrecht walte
Von dir zu uns: so sind wir nicht auf ewig
Getrennt und abgeschieden. Wert und teuer, 2155
Wie mir mein Vater war, so bist du's mir,

Und dieser Eindruck bleibt in meiner Seele.
Bringt der Geringste deines Volkes je
Den Ton der Stimme mir ins Ohr zurück,
Den ich an euch gewohnt zu hören bin. 2160
Und seh' ich an dem Ärmsten eure Tracht:
Empfangen will ich ihn wie einen Gott,
Ich will ihm selbst ein Lager zubereiten,
Auf einen Stuhl ihn an das Feuer laden
Und nur nach dir und deinem Schicksal fragen. 2165
O geben dir die Götter deiner Taten
Und deiner Milde wohlverdienten Lohn!
Leb' wohl! O, wende dich zu uns und gib
Ein holdes Wort des Abschieds mir zurück!
Dann schwellt der Wind die Segel sanfter an, 2170
Und Tränen fließen lindernder vom Auge
Des Scheidenden. Leb' wohl! und reiche mir
Zum Pfand der alten Freundschaft deine Rechte.

Thoas.

Lebt wohl! 2175



NOTES.



NOTES.

Iphigenie auf Tauris. Goethe doubtless knew that the ancient name of the country was *Chersonesus Taurica* (Greek: *Χερσόνησος Ταυρική*). He chose the form *Tauris* possibly under the influence of the French *Iphigénie en Tauride*, or perhaps because of its brevity. The *Chersonesus Taurica* is the modern Crimea, a peninsula in southern Russia, almost surrounded by the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff.—The ancient Taurians were a Scythian people notorious for the brutality of their lives and the cruelty of their religious practices.—The scene of action of the drama is the sacred grove before the Doric temple of the Taurian Artemis. Within the temple is the sacred image of the goddess. The wind rushes through the dark branches of oak and pine, and from afar one hears the surging sea. The temple with its sacred grove may be supposed to stand upon a spur of the Parthenion Mountains in the southwestern extremity of the peninsula. The unities of time and place are strictly observed according to the rules of the Greek and French classical dramas. Cf. Intr. p. cii.

Scene 1.

The opening monologue, presenting a full exposition of the situation of the heroine, corresponds to the monologue at the beginning of the drama of Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (*Ἰφιγένεια ἡ ἐν Ταύροις*), which was Goethe's chief source. It strikes at once the keynote of the action of the drama, viz. Iphigenia's intense longing to return to

her Grecian home and be restored to her family. The reports of the fall of Troy and the terrible misfortunes of her family have not yet reached her. With childlike faith she addresses her fervid prayer to Artemis, her patron goddess, who had miraculously rescued her from the knife of Calchas in Aulis (cf. Intr. pp. xiv and xxvii–xxviii), and whom she has ever since been serving as a priestess in Tauris.

1. **Heraus**, viz. out of the temple; it is to be taken with Tret' ich in l. 4. It has been asserted that the occasion of her appearance upon the scene is not clear. But from l. 11 we learn that she appears to-day in the sacred grove, as she has often done before, to express her longing to return to her native land. Her unusual agitation at the present moment may be due, in part, to the return of Thoas from war, whose intentions toward her she knows and dreads. Cf. ll. 154–5. —**rege Wipfel**, contrasted with stilles Heiligtum in l. 3.

2. **heil'gen.** Following the example of the ancients Goethe calls in this drama everything holy (*ἱερός*) which stands in some relation to the gods, e.g. Hain, Tempelstufe, Jungfrau, Feuer, Licht der Opferflamme, etc.

3. **Wie**, for ebenso wie, 'just as'. She enters the sacred grove with the same spirit of awe which she always feels when she enters the temple itself.

4. **noch jetzt**, viz. so many years after her rescue by Artemis in Aulis.

5. **sie**, refers to Schatten. This line is wanting in the earlier versions of the drama.

7. **So manches Jahr.** Goethe seems purposely to have avoided an exact statement of the years she spent in Tauris. The general spirit of the drama, however, indicates that the poet conceived her as still a young woman, perhaps between twenty-five and thirty years of age, although a close calculation of the events between her rescue from Aulis and the arrival of Orestes in Tauris would make her somewhat older. But cf. here Goethe's satire on such pedantic calculations of the age of mythological characters. Speaking of *Helen he says:*

„Ganz eigen ist's mit mythologischer Frau,
Der Dichter bringt sie, wie er's braucht, zur Schau;
Nie wird sie mündig, wird nicht alt,
Stets appetitlicher Gestalt.
Wird jung entführt, im Alter noch umfreit;
G'nug, den Poeten bindet keine Zeit."

Faust, Pt. II, ll. 7428–7433.

8. **Ein hoher Wille,** viz. the will of the goddess Artemis.

11. Cf. original prose version of 1779, which is much cruder in expression. Such comparisons will show in almost every instance the superiority in thought and expression of the final version. Cf. Intr. pp. lxv–lxvi.

12. One of the most famous and most frequently quoted lines of the drama, expressing her yearning for her Grecian home. Goethe's own long-cherished desire to see Italy may have inspired this verse. In his *Campagne in Frankreich* 1792, *Werke*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 187–188, he writes: „Das Ziel meiner innigsten Sehnsucht, deren Qual mein ganzes Inneres erfüllte, war Italien, dessen Bild und Gleichnis mir viele Jahre vergebens vorschwebte, bis ich endlich durch kühnen Entschluß die wirkliche Gegenwart zu fassen mich erdreistete."

This line probably inspired Anselm Feuerbach's famous picture of Iphigenia in the Berlin National Gallery. He represents Iphigenia in a long Greek garment, leaning upon a rock on the seashore and gazing wistfully upon the far-off sea.—In the *Odyssey* V, ll. 151–158 we find a similar situation.

13–14. **gegen,** 'in response to'. These two lines were added by Goethe in Italy and may have been inspired by the aspect of the Lake of Garda. In his *Italienische Reise* of Sept. 12, 1786, we find the following passage: „Jetzt Nachmittag weht der Wind stark gegen mich und kühlt die heiße Sonne gar lieblich. Zugleich lehrt mich Volkmann (a popular guide-book), daß dieser See ehemals Benacus geheißen, und bringt einen Vers des Virgil, worin dessen gedacht wird: Fluctibus et fremitu resonans Benace marino. (*Georg.* II, l. 160.) Der erste lateinische Vers, dessen Inhalt lebendig vor mir steht, und der in dem Augen-

blicke, da der Wind immer stärker wächst und der See höhere Wellen gegen die Anfahrt wirft, noch heute so wahr ist als vor vielen Jahrhunderten." Later on (*Italienische Reise*, letter of Jan. 6, 1787) he writes: „Am Gardasee, als der gewaltige Mittagswind die Wellen ans Ufer trieb, wo ich wenigstens so allein war als meine Heldin am Gestade von Tauris, zog ich die ersten Linien der neuen Bearbeitung, die ich in Verona, Vicenza, Padua, am fleißigsten aber in Venedig fortsetzte."

15f. A very familiar quotation.

16f. **Ihm zehrt u. s. w.** The picture here may have been suggested by the punishment of Tantalus, Iphigenia's ancestor, in the lower world. Cf. *Odyssey* XI, ll. 582–592 and Intr. p. xii.

17. **Das nächste Glück,** viz. the enjoyment of the present.

18. **abwärts,** here in the sense of fort von der Gegenwart, anderswohin.

21. **Mitgeborne,** formed after the analogy of the Greek *σύγγονοι* and the Latin *cognati*. It means those born of the same parents, hence Geschwister.—**fest und fester,** for fester und fester or immer fester, a usage quite characteristic of Goethe's and Schiller's language. Cf. l. 1691 and *Tasso*, ll. 917 and 1179.

24. **Frauen,** may be here gen. plu., but it may also be an archaic form of the gen. sing., for in Old German weak fem. nouns took the ending (e)n in the gen., dat. and acc. sing.—Woman occupied an inferior position among the ancients. Iphigenia, placed by the goddess as a priestess in a barbarous land, has in the course of years developed a strong moral independence which makes her especially sensitive to the restrictions to which woman was subjected.

25–29. Cf. this passage with its earlier versions, which are quite different. We find a similar thought in the drama of Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, ll. 1005–1006:

οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ' ἀνὴρ μὲν ἐκ δόμων
θανὼν ποθεινός, τὰ δὲ γυναικὸς ἀσθενῆ.

'A man that from a house
Dies, leaves a void: a woman matters not.'

Translation of Arthur S. Way.

29. **Glück**, here in the sense of Geschick.

30. **Schon**, 'even'. Cf. here the similar sentiment in the *Andromache* of Euripides, ll. 213 f.:

> *χρὴ γὰρ γυναῖκα, καν κακῷ πόσει δοθῇ,*
> *στέργειν.*

> 'A wife, though low-born be her lord, must yet
> Content her.'

33. **So u. s. w.** Iphigenia now proceeds to illustrate the previous general statements by referring to her own fate in Tauris.—**ein edler Mann.** It is to be noted that in the whole course of the drama Iphigenia never loses faith in the essential nobility of the king's character, a fact which is most important for the final solution of the dramatic conflict. In this conception of the king's character Goethe differs radically from Euripides, who represents Thoas as a rude unsophisticated barbarian, easily duped by the superior intelligence of the cunning Greeks. Cf. Intr. pp. xcviii–xcix.

34. **heil'gen Sklavenbanden**; Sklavenbanden refers to the fact that she is in the absolute power of the king. She calls these bonds heilig because she serves in Tauris as a priestess of Artemis. Cf. note to l. 2.

35–38. Iphigenia is a profoundly religious nature. Under ordinary circumstances she would gladly have surrendered her life to the service of her patron goddess, but now, she regretfully admits, her utter isolation in a strange land, and her longing to be restored to her family, make her duties in Tauris seem burdensome to her.

37. **freiem** = freiwilligem, as contrasted with Sklavenbanden in l. 34. The earlier versions have ewigen.

40. **Diana**; Goethe shows in this drama a distinct preference for the Latin forms of mythological names. The Greek name Artemis does not occur in this play.

41. **Des größten Königes**, because her father Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, had been selected leader of the Greek host against Troy.—**Königes** instead of Königs for the sake of the metre.

42. Reference to her miraculous escape from death through the intervention of the goddess in Aulis. Cf. Intr. p. xiv. Iphigenia's affectionate attitude toward her father is to be noted, although it was with Agamemnon's consent that she was to be sacrificed in Aulis.—**genommen**, sc. hast. The auxiliary is often omitted in dependent clauses for elegance and terseness.

43. **Tochter Zeus'**; Artemis was the daughter of Zeus and Leto (Latona).—The form of this prayer is an imitation of Homer's manner. Cf. *Iliad* I, ll. 503 ff. and Intr. p. xxxv.

45. **Wenn u. s. w.**, is to be taken with zurück begleitet [hast] (l. 48) and erhalten hast (l. 50).—**göttergleichen**, a Homeric word. Cf. *ἰσόθεος, θεοείκελος, θεοειδής*. It occurs frequently in this and other works of Goethe and refers to the noble appearance and lofty descent of heroes.—In view of the fate of Agamemnon upon his return to Mycenæ, this whole passage sounds like tragic irony.

47. **Trojas**, in l. 416 we find the gen. Trojens.—**umgewandten**, 'overthrown', 'destroyed', corresponds to the Greek verbs *ἀνατρέπειν* and *καταστρέφειν*.

49. **Die Gattin**, viz. Clytæmnestra; **den Sohn**, viz. Orestes. Agamemnon's youngest daughter, Chrysothemis, is not mentioned here because she plays no rôle in the action of the drama. Electra, however, though she does not appear in this play, has an important part assigned to her in the murder of Clytæmnestra (cf. ll. 1022 ff.), and was, moreover, to be a prominent character in *Iphigenie in Delphi*, a drama which Goethe planned in Italy and which was to be a continuation of *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, and was to treat of the fortunes of Iphigenia after her arrival in Delphi from Tauris.

50. **Die schönen Schätze**, interpreted by some as in apposition with Gattin, Elektren and Sohn, but the earlier versions which read: „hast du meine Geschwister Elektren und Oresten, den Knaben und unsre Mutter, ihm zu Hause den schönen Schatz bewahrt",—*seem* to indicate that Goethe intended it as another object *of erhalten hast*. If we accept the latter interpretation,

Schätze would refer to the possessions of the royal treasure-house in Mycenæ. Such royal treasures played an important rôle in ancient times, giving influence and power to the ruler.

51 ff. Cf. here the passage of Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 1082 ff.:

> *ὦ πότνι', ἥπερ μ' Αὐλίδος κατὰ πτυχὰς*
> *δεινῆς ἔσωσας ἐκ πατροκτόνου χερός,*
> *σῶσόν με καὶ νῦν τούσδε τ'.*

'O Goddess-queen, who erst by Aulis' clefts
Didst save me from my sire's dread murderous hand,
Save me now too with these.'

A religious heroine like Iphigenia naturally turns to the gods in prayer in moments of deep agitation or in critical situations when she is in need of spiritual help. Hence a number of prayers occur in the drama. Cf. Act I, Sc. 4; Act III, ll. 982 ff., ll. 1039 ff., ll. 1094 ff.; ll. 1215 ff.; Act IV, ll. 1317 ff., ll. 1716 f.; Act V, ll. 1916 ff.

Scene 2.

The name of Arkas does not occur in Euripides. Goethe probably derived it from Racine's *Iphigénie en Aulide*, where Agamemnon's herald bears that name. It also occurs in Crébillon's drama *Électre* and in Gotter's *Orest und Elektra.*

54. **beut**, an archaic and contracted form for bietet, now occurring only in poetry. Cf. Schiller's *Piccolomini*, l. 1238. The compound entbietet would be more usual. In their poetic works Goethe and Schiller, following the example of Klopstock, frequently prefer simple verbs where in prose we should expect compounds.

58. **vor**; in prose we should have: ich eile dem König und dem Heer voraus or voran.

59. The verbs kommt and naht indicate that the king is in advance of his army.

60. **Wir**, viz. Iphigenia and those associated with her in the service of the temple.

65. **heil'ge;** she is so called not simply because she is a priestess of Artemis, but also because she is venerated by Arkas as the benefactress of Tauris. Cf. Intr. pp. lxxxv–lxxxvi.

71. Arkas shudders before Iphigenia because of her distant and reserved manner which suggests to him some mystery which she is trying to conceal. This reference to the mystery of her birth prepares us for the following scene in which her descent is revealed. In the drama of Euripides the family of Iphigenia is well known to the Scythians.

74–77. In these few lines we have an example of stichomythy (*στιχομυθία*), which was used with special force and success by the Greek dramatists, and occurs quite frequently in the French classic tragedies and in the dramas of Goethe and Schiller. It is an animated dialogue where speech and answer follow each other in rapid succession, a speaker often embodying the words or thoughts of the preceding, but giving them a different turn. A dialogue so conducted is compressed, pointed, epigrammatic.

74. Cf. here Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 218–220:

> *νῦν δ' Ἀξείνου πόντου ξείνα*
> *δυσχόρτους οἴκους ναίω*
> *αγαμος ατεκνος ἄπολις ἄφιλος.*

> 'Lone by a stern sea's desert shores I live
> Loveless, no children clinging
> To me, the homeless, friendless.'

75. **hier,** emphatic, viz. in this country where you have been received with so much love and reverence.

76. A familiar quotation. Cf. *Odyssey* IX, ll. 34 ff.

77. Arkas means to imply: Since your own fatherland has become a stranger to you, you may regard our land as your home.

81. **Die neuen Schößlinge;** cf. Homeric *θάλος*, 'sapling' (*Odyssey* VI, l. 157). Before Die neuen Schößlinge sc. da of l. 79.—**gesellt und lieblich,** hendiadys for lieblich gesellt. The earlier *versions have in* lieblicher Gesellschaft.

84. **Ein fremder Fluch,** 'an alien curse', a curse incurred by others but which nevertheless involved her and her whole family in misfortune. It may refer to the curse of Tantalus (cf. note to ll. 16 f.) or to the abduction of Helen, which brought a long series of misfortunes upon her and her family. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 566:

κακῆς γυναικὸς χάριν ἄχαριν ἀπώλετο.

'Slain for an evil woman—graceless grace!'

86. **Mit ehrner Faust,** 'with iron hand'. The epithet **ehern,** which frequently occurs in this drama (cf. ll. 331, 540, 1129, 1309, 1361, 1680), corresponds to the Homeric χάλκεος, σιδηρεος. Cf. *Iliad* II, l. 490 and XI, l. 241.

87. **das Gedeihn,** 'the prosperous growth'.

88. **Selbst** = obgleich.

89. **nur ein Schatten;** according to Homeric conception the departed ones in Hades were Shades (σκιαί). Separated from her family Iphigenia's life in this distant foreign land seems to her but another form of death. Cf. ll. 53 and 108, also *Odyssey* XI, ll. 51 ff.

91. **so,** not to be taken with **unglücklich.** It means here 'in your present position' in which we have tried to show you every possible kindness.

96. **geneigtes Herz,** a carefully chosen expression to prepare her for his proposition in ll. 150 ff.

99–100. **Kam Thoas dir ... zu begegnen;** the idea of motion in the verb begegnen is more emphatically brought out by kam. Cf. the French *venir* with the infinitive, which may have influenced this construction.—**Gottgegebnen,** viz. von Gott gegebenen, Gottgesandten. Cf. the Greek θεόδοτος.—**mit Neigung,** cf. l. 96 and note.

102. The former sacrifice of strangers in Scythia, which was discontinued through the influence of Iphigenia, plays an important rôle in the drama and hence is mentioned again in ll. 122 ff.

104. **Stufen,** viz. steps leading to the altar.

106. A much-quoted line. **macht** = **macht aus.**

108. The departed spirits of those to whom the proper funeral rites had not been paid, were supposed by the ancients to hover restlessly about their graves. Cf. note to l. 89, also *Æneid* III, ll. 24–68 and *Antigone* ll. 245–257.

112. **jenen grauen Tagen**; according to Greek conception the lower world was gray and gloomy, enveloped in mists and clouds, and the shades of the departed ones lived there sadly and dreamily on in a state of idleness. Cf. *Odyssey* XI, ll. 215 ff. and ll. 482 ff.

113. **Lethes** (Greek λήθη), one of the rivers in Hades from which the Shades drank, becoming thereby forgetful of their former earthly existence, hence selbstvergessend as contrasted with selbstbewußtes Leben of l. 110. Cf. ll. 1258 ff.

114. **feiert**, here in the sense of müßig, untätig zubringt.

115. A familiar quotation. Iphigenia, in her longing to return to her fatherland, underestimates here her activity, for her life in Tauris has been most beneficent and useful. Cf. ll. 121 ff.

116. Cf. ll. 24 ff. and note.

117. **gnügest**, for genügest.

118. **so sehr** = so sehr auch, 'however much', 'much as I'. . .

129. **der blut'gen . . . Opfer mangelt**; mangeln with the gen. is an older construction. To-day we should say: daß ihr die . . . Opfer mangeln.

131. Goethe may here have had in mind the ancient conception of the winged goddess Victoria (*Νίκη*), who is represented in art as hovering before or above the victor, and extending to him the laurel wreath or frightening the enemy.

132. **eilt . . . voraus**; Arkas means that the enemy sometimes retreats upon the mere rumor of the approach of Thoas' army, and so he may say that 'victory hastens in advance' of the Scythian army.

139. The thought here is that through the influence of Iphigenia the rule of the despotic king has become more *lenient* and humane toward his subjects.—Goethe's con-

ception of Iphigenia was so largely influenced by the character of his friend, Charlotte v. Stein, that several passages in the drama bear a marked resemblance to some letters he addressed to her during his first residence in Weimar. Cf. here his poem to Frau v. Stein of April 14, 1776, and Intr. pp. liii–liv.

142. **unwirtbaren,** here in the sense of ungastfreundlichen. Cf. the Greek πόντος ἄξενος and Eurip. *Iph. Taur.* l. 94.

143. **zubereitest,** for bereitest, which is the reading of all the earlier versions.

144–5. A familiar quotation.

145. In **wie viel noch übrig bleibt** she probably has in mind her intention to return to Mycenæ and undertake there the expiation of her family. Cf. ll. 1699 ff., where she clearly states what she considers the chief aims of her life.—But possibly she is thinking of the work which is still to be done in Tauris.

148–149. In the words **zu stolz** is implied a slight reprimand of her attitude toward herself. Arkas thinks that it is her pride which makes her depreciate her beneficent activity in Tauris, and this pride is just as reprehensible as the vanity of those who lay too much stress upon their insignificant actions. In his *Sprüche in Prosa*, I, Goethe says: „Ein großer Fehler: daß man sich mehr dünkt, als man ist, und sich weniger schätzt, als man wert ist."

154. **ängstest,** now unusual and poetic for ängstigst (cf. l. 44). It occurs again in l. 1407.

158. **der Seinen,** viz. of his own people.

161. **Folger,** poetic for Nachfolger. For Goethe's preference for simple words where compounds would be used in ordinary prose cf. note to l. 54. Cf. also l. 204 (Schluß for Beschluß) and l. 1368 ((Schluß for Entschluß).

164. Transl. 'The Scythian sets no value on fine speeches.' The laconic speech of the Scythians (ἡ ἀπὸ Σκυθῶν ῥῆσις) was proverbial among the Greeks, who, on the contrary, prized the art of persuasive eloquence.

167 f. **von weitem . . . lenken,** 'to guide a discourse slowly

and skilfully from a remote subject to his own ends.' Cf. *Hermann und Dorothea* VI, l. 261:

„Klug das Gespräch zu lenken und wenden verstehend."

172 ff. Another example of stichomythy. Cf. note to ll. 74–77.

173. **sein Werben.** Thoas' wooing of Iphigenia is a very important element in the action of the drama. It does not occur in Euripides, but Goethe may have derived this *motif* from the drama of La Grange-Chancel entitled *Oreste et Pylade ou Iphigénie en Tauride* (1699). Cf. Intr. pp. xxxvi and xxxviii.

174. Thoas' offer of marriage seems to Iphigenia 'the most terrible threat' chiefly because such a union would prevent her from returning to Greece and there purifying and restoring her family. Cf. ll. 51 ff. and note to l. 145.

180. **ob . . . gleich;** the expressions ob—gleich, ob—schon, ob—wohl, etc., 'even if', 'although', are more often written as one word: obgleich, obschon, obwohl.

181. **in seiner großen Seele;** these words were added in the final version.

184–5. Cf. note to l. 164.

188 ff. Arkas fears that the king, angered and disappointed by the rejection of his suit, might return to his former despotic rule and reintroduce the human sacrifices into Tauris. But Iphigenia interprets Arkas' words to mean that the king might force her to marry him.

193. **dem,** dat. used instead of the English possessive; transl. 'whose passion is restrained by the reverence for the gods.'—The phrase den Busen bändigen is an Homeric expression. Cf. *Iliad* IX, l. 496: δάμασον θυμὸν μέγαν. The expression occurs again in ll. 988 and 2096.

196. **Bette,** older and now poetic form of Bett. Cf. l. 902.

198. **die entschloßne,** so called because as goddess of the chase she is always ready for quick action, alike 'resolute' to render help to those in need and to mete out punishment upon her traducers. As a virgin goddess she would therefore surely protect her maiden priestess in distress.

201. **Ein gewaltsam neues Blut.** It is best to take here gewaltsam as an adj.; neues seems to be used here in the sense of junges. The expression would then mean 'an impetuous youthful passion', which well agrees with the prose version which reads: „solch rasche Jünglingstat herrscht nicht in Thoas Blut." The poet uses neu in the sense of jung again in l. 1480 (ein neues Volk).

203. **Wie er sinnt** = wie er gesinnt ist, 'as he is disposed'.

204. **Schluß** for Beschluß; cf. notes to ll. 161 and 188 ff.

211. **Du ehrst ihn.** Iphigenia herself called Thoas ein edler Mann in l. 33.

212. **zu begegnen;** Goethe uses sometimes **zu** with the infinitive after **heißen,** although in modern German it would be omitted.

213–214. A very popular quotation, especially applicable to the influence which Frau von Stein exerted upon Goethe. Cf. note to l. 139. The truth of these words of Arkas is proved by the solution of the drama.

219. **mit Wahrheit;** these words are lacking in the earlier versions. The reading there is: „Verleih' Minerva mir, daß ich ihm sage, was ihm gefällt." In inserting the words mit Wahrheit Goethe intended to emphasize the leading trait in Iphigenia's character, her absolute truthfulness, by which the dramatic complication is finally solved.

Scene 3.

Iphigenia receives the king, who has just returned from the war, with a formal blessing.

222. **der Deinigen,** viz. of your people.

223. **frommen,** a word frequently used by Goethe in the sense of rein, den Göttern lieb, gottgefällig. She seems purposely to use this word to shield herself against the proposed suit of Thoas.—**Fülle** may have here the ordinary meaning of 'abundance' or 'plenty,' or may possibly have the sense of Erfüllung.

226 ff. The king's speech in ll. 226–230 contains a reply to each one of the three wishes uttered by Iphigenia in ll. 221–

222. In l. 226 he answers her first wish, viz. that the goddess might grant him Sieg und Ruhm (l. 221). He says that he would be satisfied if his people praised his work, which in ll. 239–243 we learn is not the case. In ll. 227 f. he answers Iphigenia's second wish for riches (cf. Reichtum of l. 222), which he rejects as a source of happiness, but Iphigenia's third wish: das Wohl der Deinigen (l. 222), appeals to him, and he expresses his appreciation of it in ll. 228–230. He interprets it, however, in the narrower sense of the blessings of family life, which leads him at once to state the purpose of his coming, viz. to renew his marriage proposal to the priestess.

228–230. A familiar quotation. Cf. here *Orestes* of Euripides, ll. 602–603:

> *γάμοι δ' ὅσοις μὲν εὖ καθεστᾶσιν βροτῶν,*
> *μακάριος αἰών.*
>
> 'Happy the life of men whose marriages
> Are blest.'

231. This line is not found in the earlier versions. It was added to deepen the personal relation between the king and the priestess.—**nahmest,** poetic for nahmst, used here for the sake of metre.

237. **gerochen,** old strong past participle, now used only in poetry for gerächt.

238. **nichts das,** etc. After the indefinite nichts we should usually expect was, which actually occurs in all the earlier versions.

247 f. **nicht . . . noch,** frequently occurs in the classics for weder . . . noch.

251 ff. Cf. here the words of Thoas in the drama of La Grange-Chancel, *Oreste et Pylade* I, 1:

> 'Quel revers! la Prestresse inconnüe, étrangère,
> Ne crut pas mon amour digne d'estre écoûté.'

Cf. note to l. 173.

255. **Abkunft,** is the reading of the first metrical version

of 1780 and of the Goeschen edition of 1787. In the prose versions of 1779 and 1781 and in the Weimar edition we find Ankunft. As far as the thought of the passage is concerned, either reading might be defended, for both her 'descent' and her 'arrival' in Tauris remained a mystery to Thoas. But the reading Abkunft agrees better with Iphigenia's words in l. 251 (Der Unbekannten) and in ll. 265 ff. Cf. here again La Grange-Chancel (I, 1), where Thoas says:

'Elle poussa son injuste fierté
Jusqu'à me refuser, soit mépris, soit prudence,
De m'apprendre son nom, son païs, sa naissance.'

256. **dem Letzten,** viz. last in rank, the most insignificant of his subjects.

258 f. Cf. here the earlier versions which are more specific.—**Not** = Notwendigkeit and refers to the necessity felt by the Taurians of keeping all strangers, especially Greeks, away from their shores for their self-protection. The laws were particularly aimed against the Greeks because of their frequent piratical attacks upon their neighbors. Cf. ll. 534, 1680 f., 2102 ff., also Eurip. *Iph. Taur.* ll. 38 ff.

260. **jedes frommen Rechts,** refers to the sacred laws of hospitality which, though denied to all other strangers, were extended to her as the heaven-sent priestess (einer Gottgegebnen, l. 99).—**genießen** with the original meaning 'to have the benefit of' formerly governed the gen., as it does here and in l. 2141, but the acc. gradually supplanted the gen. Cf. ll. 282 and 2125.

262. **ihres Tages** = ihres Lebens, but the plu. is more frequently used in this sense. Cf. *Hermann und Dorothea* IX, l. 288 and V, l. 14.

263. **Wirt,** as opposed to Gast in l. 261.

265. **Verbarg** u. s. w. = wenn ich . . . verbarg.

266. Before war's sc. so.

268. **Haupt,** poetic for 'person', like the Greek κάρα or κεφαλή.—**verwünschtes,** because she feels that as a member of the house of Tantalus she too is affected by the curse of her race.

269. **nährst**, possibly suggested by the Homeric, *τρέφειν*. Cf. *Odyssey* V, l. 135.—**faßte**. subj., 'would seize'.

272. **vor der Zeit**, viz. before the time fixed by the gods or by fate. She regards her exile in Tauris as a time of trial ordained by the gods themselves and not to be arbitrarily curtailed. Cf. l. 275.

276. **Elend**, has here a suggestion of its original sense which was still felt in Goethe's time. Elend is really a compound of Land, O. H. G. eli-lenti, M. H. G. ellende (eli or el = Latin alius), hence the word originally meant 'the other land' or 'foreign land'. As the wretchedness of a fugitive in a foreign land was most dreaded by the early Germans, the word acquired the general meaning of 'misery'. The earlier versions of this passage show more distinctly that the poet still associated the word with its original meaning of 'wretchedness of exile'. Cf. „Im Elend", *Faust*, Pt. I, Scene, Trüber Tag.

279. **Rat**, here in the sense of Ratschluß or Beschluß.

280. **gedenken**, for zugedenken. Cf. note to l. 54.

284. **Ich möchte u. s. w.**, 'it might be difficult to persuade me'.

294. Transl. 'I renounce all my claims upon you'. This promise of Thoas to allow Iphigenia to return to Greece whenever an opportunity should present itself is a very important element in the action of the drama. At a critical moment Iphigenia reminds him of this promise. Cf. ll. 1970 ff. and 2146 ff.

298. **durch mehr als e i n Gesetz**; Thoas refers here to the law of the land, to the fact that he is her king, and to her natural feelings of gratitude for all the kindness she has received at his hands.

302 ff. Cf. *Wallensteins Tod*, ll. 186 ff.

306. In the earlier versions we find: „Ich bin aus Tantals merkwürdigem Geschlecht." By the omission of a single word this line gains immeasurably in vigor and awfulness.

307. A very popular quotation. — **großes** = inhaltschweres, *because* Iphigenia claims to be descended from Tantalus

the son of Zeus, who once enjoyed the unbounded confidence of the gods. Cf. Intr. p. xii.—**gelassen** a characteristic and favorite word of Goethe occurring frequently in this play. Cf. ll. 830, 1108, 1461, 1670, 2017, 2101. The poet designates thereby a state of complete self-possession controlled by wisdom and submission to the will of the gods. The word eminently applies to Iphigenia.

309. **Hochbegnadigten,** 'one highly favored' (by the gods).

312 f. **alterfahrnen,** a word coined by Goethe, meaning 'much experienced'.—**vielen Sinn verknüpfenden,** lit. 'combining much deep thought'. Transl. 'in whose words of much experience and fraught with deep wisdom'.

314. **Orakelsprüchen,** viz. utterances which were profound and ambiguous.—From this speech of Thoas it would appear that he is acquainted with the story of Tantalus, but is ignorant of the fate of his descendants. This is not surprising, for Tantalus through his association with the gods belongs to Greek mythology, in which also the Scythians believe, as is seen from their worship of Diana. The king might, however, very naturally be ignorant of the fate of the descendants, because the story of their crimes belongs rather to the legendary history of a specific royal family than to general Greek mythology. Thoas mentions here only the greatness and wisdom of Tantalus out of regard for her feelings and because he wishes to encourage her to proceed with her story.

317–18. A popular quotation.

319 ff. The veneration and tenderness of Iphigenia toward her ancestor are to be noted. She rejects the stories of treachery and brutality ascribed to him by tradition. Cf. Intr. p. lxxxvi, also Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 386–388. To her this cruel tradition is but the arbitrary invention of poets (cf. **Dichter singen** of l. 323). She speaks very vaguely of his guilt, regarding it as the result of pardonable human frailty. It seems that she refers to his presumption (Greek ὕβρις), which arose from his long association with the gods, so that he finally deemed himself their equal,—a kind of Prometheus.

In his autobiography Goethe interprets the guilt of Tantalus, Ixion, and Sisyphus in a similar way. Cf. Intr. pp. xliv–xlv, also Horace, *Odes* I, l. 28; II, l. 18; Pindar, *Olympian Odes* I, ll. 88 ff.; and Euripides, *Orestes*, ll. 8–10.

319. **kein Verräter,** viz. der Geheimnisse der Götter.

321. **Des großen Donnrers,** viz. of Zeus. Cf. the Homeric ὑψιβρεμέτης, ἐριβρεμέτης, ἐρίγδουπος.

322 f. **ihr Gericht war streng;** she admits that the judgment of the gods was 'severe', but her piety prevents her from attributing injustice to them. Herein she differs from the other members of her family, who see in the Olympian gods the cruel persecutors of their race. Cf. ll. 1737 ff.

323. **Dichter singen;** the prose version of 1781 has: „ihre Priester sagen“. It is, however, more consistent with the office of Iphigenia as priestess to attribute the arbitrary constructions about Tantalus to poets rather than to priests.

324. **Jovis,** cf. note to l. 40.

325. **des alten Tartarus;** Tartarus is according to Homeric conception a deep abyss 'as far beneath Hades as heaven is high above earth' (*Iliad* VIII, l. 13). It was regarded as the oldest part of Hades, created out of Chaos before the earth.

328. **der Titanen,** qualifies both Brust and Mark, as is seen from the prose version of 1781.—The Titans were the sons and daughters of Uranos (heaven) and Ge (earth). They overthrew Uranos and enthroned Cronos, the youngest and bravest among them. But Cronos was in turn conquered in a terrible battle (commonly called Gigantomachia or Titanomachia) by Zeus. After the conflicts of Zeus with the Titans his dominion in Olympus was securely established. The Titans were regarded by the ancients as primitive gods of enormous physical strength, whose prevailing characteristic was constant and bitter defiance to the rule of Zeus. Tantalus and his descendants were not regarded by the ancients as Titans, although according to the tradition Tantalus' mother was the Titaness Pluto. Cf. Intr. p. xi. Goethe simply intends to compare here the mental state of Tantalus and *his descendants* with that of the Titans. Like the Titans

the race of Tantalus was impetuous, arrogant, and defiant, wanting in moderation and self-control.—**Brust** seems to refer to the spiritual qualities of the Titans, **Mark** to the physical.

331. **Der Gott,** used here in general, like θεός in Homer for die Gottheit or die Götter.—**ehern Band,** cf. note to l. 86. It denotes here the lack of spiritual insight, the moral blindness of the race of Tantalus. They were slaves to all the promptings of unrestrained passion. Cf. Goethe's letter to Schiller of Aug. 9, 1797, where the same expression occurs, although used in a lighter sense. See also *Maria Stuart*, ll. 334 f.

332. **Rat,** used here in the sense of Einsicht, Überlegung, like the Latin *consilium*.

336 ff. On p. 112 is given the genealogical table of the house of Tantalus.

336. **der Gewaltig-wollende,** 'the man of violent will'.

337 ff. Cf. Intr. pp. xii–xiii. In his account of the fortunes of Pelops Goethe follows Hyginus, Fable 84. Cf. Intr. p. xxxv.

339. A line of six feet. **Önomaus'** has four syllables and **Hippodamien** five. Read:

Ónomaús' Erzéugte Híppodámíen.

Erzeugte, 'daughter'. Cf. the Latin *natus deā*.

340. **bringt,** in the sense gebiert, so also in l. 404.

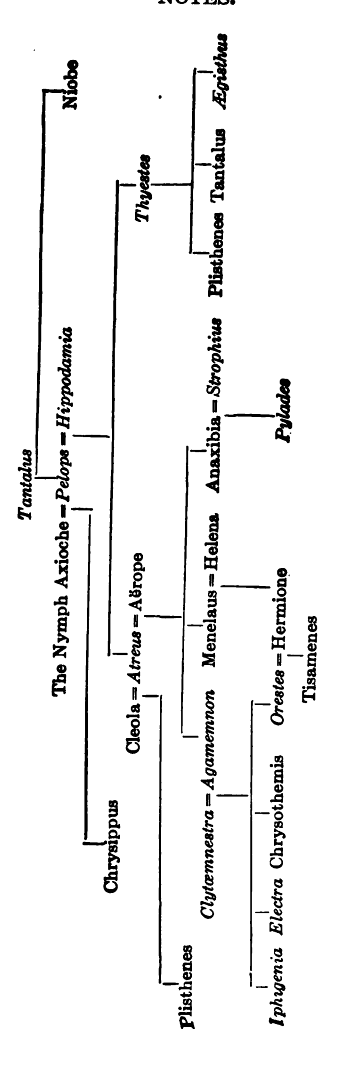
342. **ersten Sohn,** viz. Chrysippus (cf. genealogical table), whom in all the earlier versions Goethe mentions by name. He was the son of Pelops and the nymph Axioche, and according to tradition it was his stepmother Hippodamia who incited her sons Atreus and Thyestes to murder him.

348 f. **sie entleibt sich selbst.** Goethe follows here Hyginus, Fable 85.

351–59. This passage is lacking in the earlier versions. Iphigenia refers here to the law of heredity. Cf. gewisses Erbteil of l. 330.

360. **der Stadt,** viz. Mycenæ, a city in Argolis situated fourteen miles south-southwest of Corinth. According to tradition Pelops ruled over Pisa. After the murder of Plisthenes Atreus and Thyestes were obliged to flee and

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE HOUSE OF TANTALUS.



(The names printed in italics occur in the drama.)

found refuge at the court of their brother-in-law Sthenelus, king of Mycenæ, upon whose death they inherited the kingdom.—It is to be noticed that in the following account Goethe makes free use of tradition, enlarging upon or curtailing it, as it suits his purposes. His chief source here was Hyginus, Fables 86 and 97.

366. **einen Sohn,** viz. Plisthenes, son of Atreus and Cleola. See genealogical table. His name, though mentioned in the earlier versions, is here omitted as being of no importance. The names of Chrysippus (cf. note to l. 342) and Plisthenes Goethe obtained from Hyginus.

374. **trunknen,** lit. 'intoxicated', say 'frenzied', viz. with the satisfaction of revenge at the sight of the tortures of the supposed son of Thyestes.

383. **da** = **als,** to be taken with **gesättigt (hat), ergreift** (l. 384), **fragt** (l. 385), and **glaubt** (l. 387).

384–387. The passage: **eine Wehmut . . . glaubt** (l. 387) does not occcur in the earlier versions. Goethe may here have been influenced by Seneca's tragedy *Thyestes*, who exclaims after the banquet (ll. 999–1002):

> Quis hic tumulus viscera exagitat mea?
> Quid tremuit intus? sentio impatiens onus.
> Meumque gemitu non meo pectus gemit.

387. The line has four feet. The lacking foot may be filled out by the pause which naturally occurs after **glaubt** and by which Iphigenia expresses her horror at the inhumanity of her ancestor.

388. **der Erschlagnen,** viz. Plisthenes and Tantalus (cf. genealogical table). The third son of Thyestes, Ægisthus, became the avenger of his father and his brothers. Cf. Intr. p. xv.

390–391. **die Sonn',** viz. the god of the sun, Helios (Apollo). The conception that Helios, horrified by the atrocious deed of Atreus, changed his course in order to envelop the deed in darkness, is found in Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 191 ff.:

> μόχθος δ' ἐκ μόχθων ἄσσει,
> δινευούσαις ἵπποις ὅποτε

πταναῖς ἀλλάξας ἐξ ἕδρας
ἱερὸν μετέβασ' ὄμμ' αὐγᾶς
ἅλιος.

'Sorrow after sorrow springs apace, ever since the sun with circling wingèd steeds changed his heavenly station and moved his sacred eye of radiance away.'

Translation of Isaac Flagg.

Cf. also Eurip. *Electra*, ll. 736 ff.

393. **der Männer,** viz. men of our family. The prose version of 1781 reads: „Die finstre Nacht hat noch viel schreckliches Geschick und Taten d i e s e r Unseligen gebrütet"—showing that Goethe had here in mind other crimes of Atreus and Thyestes.

395 f. **und läßt uns . . . sehn,** meaning: läßt uns nur ahnen, daß Greuliches geschehen ist.

397. **auch,** viz. wie die Nacht (l. 395).

398–9. That a woman of the purity and nobility of Iphigenia should have sprung from such a criminal race seems to Thoas nothing short of miraculous. She is the only guiltless member of her family.

401 ff. **Doch** u. s. w., an answer to Thoas' question in ll. 398 f. Agamemnon, her father, was, unlike his ancestors, a model of perfect manhood. Iphigenia's love and veneration for her father are in marked contrast to the feelings of Iphigenia of Euripides who could never forgive Agamemnon for having given his consent to her sacrifice in Aulis. Cf. note to ll. 319 ff. and Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 865, where Iphigenia refers to her sacrifice as follows:

ἀπάτορ' ἀπάτορα πότμον ἔλαχον.

'An unfatherly father by doom was allotted to me.'

She also continues to hate all those who were in any way responsible for her sacrifice, viz. Helen, Menelaus, and Achilles (ll. 365 ff.), whereas a spirit of forgiveness pervades all the sentiments of Goethe's Iphigenia.

402. **seit meiner ersten Zeit,** viz. seit meiner Kindheit. Cf. the Latin *a prima aetate*.—Ll. 401–403 were inserted in the final revision of the drama.

404. **brachte**, cf. note to l. 340.

411. **wuchs**, for heranwuchs. Cf. note to l. 54.

412. **sichern**, used here in the sense of sich sicher fühlenden. Cf. the Latin *securus*.

416. **Trojens**, now unusual for Trojas. Cf. Mycenens (l. 878) and note to l. 47.—**la erte**, for sich lagern ließ. The transitive use of lagern, when the object refers to persons, is unusual.

419. **Aulis**, a harbor on the eastern coast of Bœotia, on the channel Euripus which separates Bœotia from the island of Eubœa. Here the Greek fleet assembled before sailing for Troy.

420 ff. Cf. Intr. p. xiv.

423. **Kalchas**, the soothsayer of the Greeks and an important character in the *Iliad*.

424. **Sie lockten u. s. w.** Notice the indefinite Sie referring to the Greeks in general and showing that she does not regard her father as solely responsible for this action.—The experiences of Iphigenia in Aulis were treated by Euripides in a drama entitled: *Ἰφιγένεια ἡ ἐν Αὐλίδι* (*Iphigenia in Aulis*), which was translated by Schiller in 1788. The theme was also dramatized by Racine in *Iphigénie en Aulide*. Cf. Intr. p. xxxvi.

425–430. This passage does not occur in the earlier versions. Agamemnon's consent to the sacrifice of his daughter is not to be considered in the same category with the crimes of Atreus and Thyestes, for it was a sacrifice made in painful submission to the inscrutable will of the goddess. Therefore even this cruel deed of Agamemnon could not destroy Iphigenia's love and reverence for her father.

431–2. **Enkel** for Enkelin. Cf. Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, l. 2451 where Mary says to Elizabeth: „Ich bin Euer König". It is to be noticed that in Iphigenia's statement here there are implied three reasons why the king should desist from his suit. She is a grandchild of Atreus and hence belongs to a criminal race; she is the daughter of Agamemnon and hopes to be some day reunited to her family, and above all, having

been rescued by Artemis and placed as a priestess in her temple, she belongs exclusively to the goddess. The expression der Göttin Eigentum was added in the final version.

438–9. Cf. here the words of Iphigenia in the drama of La Grange-Chancel, *Oreste et Pylade*, where the priestess gives practically the same reason for the rejection of the king's suit:

'Laisse en paix une fille aux autels dévouée.'

442. **Schein**, viz. 'the appearance' or 'semblance' of death in Aulis.

445 f. **ihren Weg**, viz. the life which the goddess has chosen for me. — **hätte . . . gefesselt?** dubitative subj., 'should I have bound myself?' The imperfect and pluperfect subjunctives are often used to express a doubt or an emphatic denial of a real or an assumed assertion.

447. **Ein Zeichen bat ich**, viz. von meiner Göttin. In modern prose we should say um ein Zeichen bat ich. Bitten with the direct object of the thing occurs often in the Bible and in poetry.—**wenn ich bleiben sollte**; Iphigenia implies that she has not yet received such a sign from the goddess to remain in Tauris, and therefore still hopes to return some day to Greece.

450–451. A familiar quotation.

455. **entgegen**, to be taken with sehnen muß, 'how I must long to meet'.

457–60. These lines were added in the final version.

460. **von Säul' an Säulen**, unusual for von Säule zu Säule. For other examples of this combination of the sing. and the plu. cf. ll. 1747–8 and *Faust*, ll. 29 and 4658.

463. **So kehr' zurück!** Not to be taken literally, but as an expression of the king's anger and impatience at the rejection of his suit.

470–1 f. **dem Vater . . . lockt**; Thoas may here have Medea in mind, who left her father, the king of Colchis, to follow Jason.—**dem Gemahl**, a reference to Helen, who deserted *her husband* Menelaus.

472. **rasche**, here in the sense of 'rash', 'hasty'. Cf. ll. 1824, 2031.

474. **goldne Zunge; golden** is a favorite word with Goethe and Schiller in the sense of excellent, worthy, or beautiful.—Cf. the Greek χρύσεος, 'golden', which is also frequently used by the Greek poets to denote excellence, perfection. So orators of a high order were designated by the Greeks as χρυσόστομοι, 'golden-mouthed'. Cf. ll. 1111, 1198, 1615.

475. **deines edeln Wortes**; cf. ll. 293 ff. and note.

476. **so**, is emphatic.

479. **Doch sollt ich's u. s. w.** = Doch hätte ich auch das erwarten sollen.—**handeln ging; gehen** with the infinitive without zu is now unusual, except in colloquial speech, although it occurred quite often in older German and has survived in a few expressions such as spazieren, schlafen, betteln gehen. Cf. the French *aller* with the infinitive and note to ll. 99–100.

483. **die Waffen eines Weibes**, viz. the firmness of woman in times of trial and the steadfastness of her convictions. Cf. ll. 791 ff.

486. **unbekannt mit ... mir**; because Thoas in his present passion does not realize that his marriage to her would not make him happy, unless she really loved him (unbekannt mit dir), and because the king does not fully appreciate her intense longing to return to Greece (unbekannt mit mir).

490 ff. In the drama of La Grange-Chancel Iphigenia rejects in similar terms the king's proposal of marriage:

> 'Les dieux n'approuvent point ton hymen avec moy.'
>
> *Oreste et Pylade*, I, 3.

493 ff. For the stichomythy of this passage cf. note to ll. 74–77.

494. Cf. Schiller's *Piccolomini*, l. 1840.

496. **der Sturm**; the earlier versions have: „der Sturm der Leidenschaft".

497. **wohl**, ironical.

499 f. **geerbtes Recht u. s. w.**, reference to Tantalus and his relation to the Olympian gods. Cf. Intr. pp. xi–xii.

501. **erdgebornen**, cf. the Greek γηγενής. The word occurs frequently in Goethe's works. Cf. l. 1370. Sarcastically Thoas contrasts himself with Tantalus, the son of Zeus.

503 ff. **Ich bin ein Mensch**, viz. I am but human and am irritated when my purposes are crossed. The king has regained his composure and says this in excuse of his former ungenerous remark, but he cuts short the interview, fearing that he might again be carried away by anger.—The king's command to restore the human sacrifices is not merely a threat. He means what he says. Arkas informed us that only with great difficulty had Iphigenia been able through her power of gentle persuasion to induce the king to abolish the human sacrifices. Now that his suit is rejected, the spell of Iphigenia's beneficent influence is broken, and he readily reverts to the old reasons for continuing the cruel practice. Although he formerly admitted that Iphigenia brought blessing to his land (cf. ll. 281 ff.), we may well believe him that some discontented people murmured against the discontinuance of the human sacrifices and clamored loudly for their restoration when his only son and heir had been killed in battle (cf. ll. 516 ff.). Disappointed in his hopes, he now distrusts the influence of Iphigenia; the demands of the discontented faction of his people seem now just to him, and so he orders the restoration of the human sacrifices.

516. **die Sinnen**, instead of die Sinne. The weak form occurs quite frequently in the 17th and 18th centuries. Goethe uses it often to avoid a hiatus, as here, or for the sake of the rime. Cf. *Faust* Pt. I, ll. 431, 1633, etc.

518 f. **rufen sie . . . über mich**, 'hold me responsible for', 'accuse me of'.

522 ff. Cf. here the similar thought in Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 386 ff.:

ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν
Τὰ Ταντάλου θεοῖσιν ἑστιάματα

ἄπιστα κρίνω, παιδὸς ἡσθῆναι βορᾷ,
Τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ', αὐτοὺς ὄντας ἀνθρωποκτόνους,
εἰς τὴν θεὸν τὸ φαῦλον ἀναφέρειν δοκῶ·
οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν.

'Nay, I hold unworthy credence
The banquet given of Tantalus to the Gods,—
As though the Gods could savour a child's flesh!
Even so, this folk, themselves man-murderers,
Charge on their Goddess their own sin, I ween;
For I believe that none of Gods is vile.'

Iphigenia's view of the gods as beneficent is confirmed by the action of the drama. Cf. Intr. pp. lxxxiv–lxxxv.

523–5. A popular quotation.

523. In the earlier versions the additional thought occurs: „Versöhnt die Unterirdischen mit Blut und diesen ist das Blut der Tiere Labsal!"

529. **mit leicht beweglicher Vernunft,** because human reason is easily swayed by arguments and change of circumstances.

532. The fact that two strangers have just been seized on the shores of Tauris prepares us for the appearance of Orestes and Pylades at the beginning of the second act, and the command to sacrifice them gives a strong impulse to the action of the drama. This command threatens to destroy the purifying and civilizing work of Iphigenia in Tauris and compel her to act contrary to her deepest religious and moral convictions. Moreover, Thoas promised to allow her to return home, if an opportunity to do so should ever present itself (cf. ll. 293 ff.). Somehow she must get into communication with her family, but how else is this possible except through strangers who may accidentally come to the shores of Tauris?—and now she is commanded to sacrifice all strangers.

536. **erstes,** 'original'; **rechtes = rechtmäßiges, worauf die Göttin ein Recht hat,** say 'due'.

Scene 4.

The first act ends as it began with a prayer to the goddess (cf. note at the end of Scene 1). In the first scene she prayed for a return to her fatherland, now she prays that she be spared shedding human blood. Her great mental agitation is expressed here by the irregular metre. Each line has four feet and consists of trochees and dactyls. The endings are usually feminine except in l. 541. The praise of the goddess with which this monologue opens and its general wise reflections give to it something of the nature of the Greek choral ode. Cf. Intr. p. ciii.

The following is the metre of the first six lines:

538. — ◡ | — ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡ ◡
539. — ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡
540. — ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡
541. — ◡ | — ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | —
542. — ◡ ◡ | — ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡
543. — ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡ ◡ | — ◡

538 ff. She refers here to her own rescue by Diana in Aulis.

540. **ehrnen**, here = gefühllosen, ohne Teilnahme, 'inexorable'. Geschick = Schicksal. The conception here of Diana wresting Iphigenia from the very arms of inexorable Fate is, strictly speaking, not in accord with the Greek notion of the supremacy of Fate, whose decrees cannot be changed even by the gods themselves. But probably the poet simply intends to express here in a forcible way Iphigenia's faith in the great power of her patron goddess. When her death seemed inevitable in Aulis, the goddess rescued her, and so she may help her again in her present critical situation.

543. **dir gut dünkt**, for the older and more correct **dich dünkt**. Cf. ll. 718 and 1415.

546–8. These lines were added in the final version. Cf. here Goethe's poem *An den Mond* (1778), ll. 3–8. Goethe frequently experienced the soothing effect of the light of the moon and expressed it in his poetry.

549. **enthalte vom Blut**; enthalten is here used in the sense of abhalten or fernhalten. So also in Luther. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 994:

σφαγῆς τε γὰρ σῆς χεῖρ' ἀπαλλάξαιμεν ἄν.

'So of thy slaughter shall my hands be clean.'

551. **zufällig**, here in the sense of **unabsichtlich**.

552. **traurig-unwilligen**, a compound coined by Goethe. The poet means here a person who against his will (**unwillig**, Latin *invitus*) is obliged to kill a man, and is thereby cast into sorrow (**traurig**). Transl. 'reluctant and sorrowing'. For similar bold compounds cf. ll. 1005, 1189, 1345.

553. **Böse Stunden**, viz. the times of dejection when a spirit of self-criticism comes upon man.—**schrecken**, sc. **ihn**.

554 ff. Iphigenia's firm belief in the goodness and forgiveness of the gods stands out in marked contrast to the pessimistic view of the nature of the gods held by the other members of her family. Cf. Intr. pp. lxxxiv–lxxxv.

555. **Weit verbreitete**, probably suggested by the Homeric πολυσπερής, 'wide-spread' (cf. *Odyssey* XI, l. 365, and *Iliad* II, l. 804). **Geschlechter der Menschen**; cf. the Homeric γένος ἀνδρῶν (*Iliad* XII, l. 23).

557 ff. **dem Sterblichen**; note the antithesis to **die Unsterblichen** in l. 554. **wollen ihm gerne . . . lassen**, 'they willingly grant and permit him for a while to enjoy with them the delightful aspect of their own eternal heaven'. Cf. here the *Electra* of Euripides, ll. 1349 ff.

Act II, Scene 1.

The friendship of Orestes and Pylades was proverbial in antiquity. The drama of Euripides and almost all the French and German dramas treating the Orestes theme develop at great length the extraordinary nobility of this friendship.—We may assume that Orestes and Pylades have at the command of Thoas been brought to the grove of the temple to be sacrificed by the priestess. They are both

fettered, and the guards who have brought them in, have remained behind so that they do not appear upon the stage. The scene in its situation and sentiments has some points of resemblance to the scene between Admetus and Hercules in Wieland's *Alceste*, Act III, Scene 4. Cf. Intr. p. civ.

561 ff. Orestes, overburdened by the consciousness of his guilt incurred through the murder of his mother, welcomes death as a release from his torments.

562. **wird meine Seele stiller,** because the Furies, not being allowed to enter the sacred grove of the temple, have for the time being ceased to torture him.

563. **Apollen;** the inflectional ending with proper names often occurs in the 18th century, but is very unusual to-day. Cf. ll. 49 and 722.

564. **Rachegeister,** viz. Furies, who began to pursue Orestes immediately after the murder of his mother Clytæmnestra. They were three in number, Tisiphone, Alecto and Megæra, were descended from the old gods, and lived in the lower world. Originally they were regarded as the avengers of every moral law of the universe, whether committed by gods or men. Later on their sphere of action was restricted to the family, and they inexorably pursued and avenged every wrong done to the sacred ties of family, and especially the murder of kindred. They had brazen feet so that they were tireless in their pursuit. Their features were hideous, expressing wild lust for the blood of their victims; their hair was made of serpents. Escape from them was impossible, for with their tireless energy they could always reach their human prey. With torch swung on high they pursued their victim, until they destroyed him or drove him to madness. The ancients feared even to mention their names and used circumlocution for that purpose. (Cf. Eurip. *Orestes*, ll. 408 ff.) Goethe calls them by various names, viz. die Unterirdischen (ll. 581, 727), Höllengeister (l. 629), and Larven (l. 588). Their terrible appearance and their dread offices are most effectively described in the *Eumenides* of Æschylus.

569–570. This pessimistic interpretation of the oracle of

Apollo is quite characteristic of his present dejected frame of mind. Hans Morsch has pointed out the striking resemblance between this passage and the following lines of Johann Elias Schlegel's drama *Geschwister auf Taurien* (1737), III, 4:

> Ja, Phöbus, du hast Recht. Dein Ausspruch ist erfüllet.
> . . . .
> . . . . Das Ende meiner Not.
> Find' ich im Tempel hier, obgleich durch meinen Tod.

Cf. Morsch, *Vorgeschichte von Goethe's Iphigenie* in *Vierteljahrschrift für Litteraturgeschichte*, Vol. IV, p. 88. See also Intr. pp. xxxvi ff.

571. **eine Götterhand,** referred by some to Apollo, whom Orestes now regards as the cause of all his misfortunes, for it was Apollo who commanded him to murder his mother in order to avenge his father. But in view of the next line it seems better to refer the word to the Furies, who have been pursuing and torturing him ever since he murdered his mother.

574. **Atreus' Enkel,** may refer to both Orestes and Pylades, for both were grandsons of Atreus, but from what follows it appears that Orestes refers to himself.

576. **wie meine Ahnen;** he refers to Atreus, who was murdered by Ægisthus, the only surviving son of Thyestes, and possibly also to Pelops, who was slain by his father Tantalus, but afterward restored to life. Cf. Intr. pp. xii and xiv.

577. **Jammertode,** a compound coined by Goethe.

579. **im verworfnen Winkel,** 'in a wretched or despicable corner', as opposed to a glorious death upon the battlefield as is worthy of a hero.

580. **Der nahverwandte Meuchelmörder,** viz. Ægisthus, who was the cousin of Agamemnon (see genealogical table) and who with the help of Clytæmnestra ensnared and killed Agamemnon in the bath. Cf. ll. 891–900.

581 ff. The thought of the murder of Agamemnon by Ægisthus naturally recalls to him his own murder of Clytæmnestra, and, seized by this terrible memory, he thinks

that he again sees the Furies, and begs them to desist. The description of the Furies in this passage and in ll. 1052 ff. was doubtless influenced by the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, ll. 244 ff. (cf. note to l. 564). But whereas in Æschylus the Furies appear bodily upon the stage, they never do so in our drama. Goethe conceives them as the avenging spirits dwelling within Orestes, creatures of his overwrought fancy, which in his intense consciousness of guilt he actually believes to see and to hear. Schiller when he undertook the revision of the drama in 1802 (cf. Intr. pp. lxviii ff.) was especially dissatisfied with this feature of the play. With his strong sense for what was theatrically effective he would have preferred the bodily representation of the Furies upon the stage. On Jan. 22, 1802, he wrote to Goethe: „Orest selbst ist das Bedenklichste im Ganzen; ohne Furien ist kein Orest, und jetzt da die Ursache seines Zustands nicht in die Sinne fällt, da sie blos im Gemüt ist, so ist sein Zustand eine zu lange und zu einförmige Qual, ohne Gegenstand." But such a bodily representation of the Furies would have ill accorded with the spirit of Goethe's play, which Schiller himself characterized very happily in the same letter: „Seele möchte ich es nennen, was den eigentlichen Vorzug davon ausmacht."

581. **ihr Unterird'schen,** cf. note to l. 564.

582. **nach dem Blut,** to be taken with spürend hetzt, l. 584. **ihr** would ordinarily follow the relative die. Transl. 'Ye infernal beings who, like hounds let loose, hunt (me) by the scent of the blood which, etc.' Goethe here follows Æschylus in the conception that the blood of the mother which sprinkled Orestes when he committed the murder never dries up, but continues to trickle down his steps, and thus marks the path for the Furies. Cf. *Eumenides*, ll. 244 ff.

588. **Larven,** from Latin *larvae* 'spectres', viz. tortured spirits of evil-doers which occasionally rise in hideous forms from Hades, terrifying men. It is therefore fitly used here for the Furies. Cf. note to l. 564. In the first prose version *we find:* „Larven des Erebus".

592. **Banns**, here = Verbannung. After the murder of Clytæmnestra Orestes was outlawed and banished from Mycenæ. Cf. Eurip. *Orestes*, ll. 46 ff.—**unschuldigen Genossen**, because Pylades had accompanied his friend and cousin when he went to Mycenæ to commit the murder, and then went into voluntary exile with him. However, according to the *Orestes* of Euripides (ll. 765–768) Pylades actually assisted Orestes in the murder, whereupon his father Strophius drove him from home.—Cf. with this passage the following lines of Johann Elias Schlegel's *Geschwister auf Taurien*, Act III, Sc. 4:

„Nur du, mein treuster Freund, verbitterst mir das Sterben.
Ach, warum muß ich dich zugleich mit mir verderben."

See note to ll. 569–570.

593. Line of six feet.—**Trauerland**, viz. Hades.

598 ff. **durch die verworrnen Pfade . . . aufzuwinden**, a metaphor derived from the legend of Theseus, to whom Ariadne gave a clue of thread by which he found his way out of the labyrinth in Crete after he had slain the Minotaur.

601. **Ich denke nicht den Tod.** Denken is sometimes used in higher diction with the acc. without the preposition to emphasize the content of the thought. Cf. l. 1765.

606. **unsre Locken . . . abzuschneiden**; before sacrificing the victim, it was customary to cut off a lock of hair from the forehead and burn it on the altar. Cf. *Iliad* III, ll. 272–273.

608 ff. Cf. here the encouraging words of Hercules to Admetus:

„Dein Zustand jammert mich, Admet,
Ich fühle deinen Schmerz. Doch zur Verzweiflung sinkt
Kein edler Mann herab!—Wie? war Admet
Nicht immer ein Verehrer
Der Götter?—Wo ist sein Vertraun
Auf ihre Macht?"

Wieland, *Alceste*, III, 4.

See introductory note to this scene.

609. **Unmut**, here in the sense of 'despondency'.—**zweifelnd**, viz. in the promise of Apollo, ll. 610 ff. Orestes'

doubt in the oracle of Apollo will precipitate the danger because in such a frame of mind he will do nothing to avert it.

610 ff. The utterance of the oracle is here vaguely stated, as its exact wording is not to be given till the end of the drama, ll. 2113 ff. Pylades lays here special stress upon the word **Rückkehr**, his meaning being that if the god promised help, a return to Greece was tacitly implied. He thus tries to dispel Orestes' gloomy interpretation of the oracle in ll. 569–570.

613. This statement does not seem to agree with the ambiguity of the words of the oracle in ll. 2113 ff. But Pylades means to say that it is wrong to attribute *intentional* ambiguity to the oracles of the gods. In this drama it is human short-sightedness that makes the oracle of Apollo seem ambiguous. After Orestes is freed from the Furies, he discovers in a critical moment the real meaning of the oracle and recognizes in it the beneficent purposes of Apollo toward him. Cf. ll. 2108 ff.

615 ff. Cf. the prose version of 1781: „Mir lag die dunkle Decke des Lebens von Kindheit an schon um das zarte Haupt. Unter einer Mutter, die des abwesenden Gemahls vergaß, wuchs ich gedrückt herauf." The resemblance of Orestes to his father constantly reminded Clytæmnestra of her guilt and so she treated him with coldness and reserve.

620. **still**, adv. with saß (l. 621). The word indicates here her sullen brooding over the criminal conduct of her mother.

623. **wie**, temporal, equivalent to wenn or während. The earlier versions read: „wenn sie weinte".

628. **Es kam der Tag**—he is probably thinking here of his matricide, although he may possibly be referring to the day when his father was murdered. Cf. ll. 635–6.—Pylades interrupts him to turn his thoughts to more cheerful subjects. Orestes is, however, so overburdened with the consciousness of guilt that his thoughts irresistibly revert to the scenes of horror, so that the efforts of Pylades to calm him not only prove futile, but even deepen his gloom and despair. With *fine art* the poet makes us feel that confession would now

have been a relief to him, and thus prepares us for the great confession in the next act (III, 2), which bursts forth with all the violence of long-suppressed emotion.

629. **Höllengeister,** viz. Furies. Goethe uses in this drama Hölle as synonymous with Hades. Cf. Höllenschwefel, l. 1154.

632–3. A familiar quotation.

632. **guten,** here in the sense of tüchtigen.

636. **da** = als; cf. l. 644.—**unwillig,** 'against his will', 'reluctantly', referring to his unnatural death. Cf. note to l. 552. Some commentators interpret the word in its usual meaning of 'indignant'; in that case it would refer to Agamemnon's feelings upon discovering the treachery of his wife. But this interpretation seems weak in this passage.—**Orkus,** Latin word for Hades. Cf. note to l. 40.

639. **worden,** for geworden; it is the older form of the past participle, and unless used as an auxiliary, occurs only in poetry.

641–2. Cf. the words of Pylades in Schlegel's *Geschwister auf Taurien,* III, 4:

„Ich mag kein andres Leben,
Als das der Himmel mir mit dir zugleich gegeben."

644. **Da,** to be taken also with pflegte, l. 646. Cf. note to l. 636.—**freie Stätte,** for Freistatt. For the youth of Orestes at the court of his uncle Strophius cf. Intr. p. xv.

650. **mit neuem Leben,** a great improvement on „mit neuer Torheit", which is the reading of the earlier versions.

651. **Mir,** wanting in the earlier versions and here introduced probably for emphasis.

652. **meiner Not;** originally vergessen was followed by the genit., a usage which was still quite common in the 18th century, but gradually the acc. supplanted the genit., which is now used only in poetry and in elevated diction.

654. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.,* l. 674, where Pylades says:

αἰσχρὸν θανόντος σοῦ βλέπειν ἡμᾶς φάος.

''Twere base that I live on, when thou art dead.'

655. The thought of this line is brought out more clearly in the earlier versions: „Mit deiner Liebe zu mir begann dein Elend!"

656. **das Ängstliche**, here in the sense of das Ängstigende, das Schreckliche, das Entsetzliche.

662–3. **Der Nächste**, 'the first'. Cf. here the line in Gotter's drama *Orest und Elektra*, II, 1, where Orestes exclaims:

„Mein Unglücksstern vergiftet auch dein Leben."

Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter was a friend of Goethe, and his drama *Orest und Elektra*, produced in Weimar in 1772, was well known to the poet. Traces of its influence are perceptible in our drama. Cf. Intr. pp. xxxviii–xxxix.

665–6. A familiar quotation.

666 ff. **Große Taten?** Words uttered in a spirit of melancholy and suggesting the thought that the great deeds they dreamed of in their youth will never be realized. The depressed mood of Orestes makes him see the varied pictures of his boyhood days as through a veil, and the elegiac tone of his words enhances the pathos of this famous passage. Possibly the poet has here in mind his own friendship with Karl August during his first years of residence in Weimar. There is a suggestion of Rousseau's sentimentalism and his devotion to nature in this passage.

670. **Brust und Faust**; both words probably refer to physical strength. Some, however, take Brust in the sense of courage, Cf. note to Brust und Mark, l. 328.—**dem hohen Ahnherrn**; in the prose versions we find the plural „unsern Ahnherrn", which shows that Orestes refers here to his ancestors in general. The substitution of the sing. in the collective sense of 'ancestry' for the plur. is more poetic.

671. **so**, refers to the thought of the preceding line, viz. like our ancestors. Although Orestes says that in their youth they took as their models the strength and prowess *of their* ancestors, his description applies better to such

heroes as Hercules, Theseus, or Perseus than to the descendants of Tantalus.

673. **Und dann,** sc. wenn of l. 668 with the verbs saßen (l. 674), spielten (l. 675) and lag (l. 676).

678–9. Just as the stars seemed to appear to them in ever growing numbers as they were gazing upon the vaults of heaven, so future deeds of heroism rose innumerable before their imagination.

681–9. To encourage Orestes, whose words imply that they had only dreamed of great deeds but had accomplished none, Pylades explains that the glorious deeds of past heroes as they have been transmitted to posterity owe much of their beauty and inspiriting quality to the idealizing process of a long series of minstrels. In reality, however, the deeds of their ancestors were as laborious and fragmentary as their own. Cf. here Schiller's poems *Die Ideale*, and *Erwartung und Erfüllung.*

681. **dringt,** for the now usual drängt, occurs frequently in the 18th century. Cf. *Faust*, Pt. I, l. 495.

689. Biblical language. Cf. *I. Corinthians* XIII, 9; *Ps.* XC, 10. For the influence of the Bible upon the thought and language of Goethe cf. *Goethe-Jahrbuch* VIII, 187 ff. —**eitel,** used here in the now obsolete sense of nichts als or lauter, 'mere'. It occurs frequently in this sense in Luther.—Notice that this line has but three feet.

694 ff. **ihrem Schatten,** viz. the idealized forms of our ancestors created by poetic fancy, which like the gods (götterleich) seem to dwell far beyond us upon the highest mountain peaks.

697–700. Meaning: I do not esteem a man whose deeds are done not for their own sake but for glory and the approbation of the world. You, Orestes, have acted from higher motives, and therefore should thank the gods that, while still so young (so früh), you have been able to accomplish so much (so viel). Pylades refers to the fact that Orestes avenged his father in pursuance, as he believed, of the wishes of the gods. The thought of ll. 699–700 is more clearly expressed

in the prose version: „allein du darfst den Göttern reichlich danken für das, was sie durch dich, den Jüngling, schon getan.“

706. **letzte**, here in the sense of höchste.

707. **Schlächter**, 'butcher', expresses here Orestes' disgust at the deed.

708. **doch verehrten**, 'whom, after all, I revered', a fine touch not found in the earlier versions. The prose version reads: „Mich haben sie zum Schlächter auserkoren, zum Mörder meiner Mutter, zum unerhörten Rächer unerhörter Schandtat.“ The words were inserted to suggest the filial piety of Orestes, which he had to suppress to carry out what he believed to be the wishes of the gods.

710. **Durch ihren Wink u. s. w.** This expression is lacking in the earlier versions and was introduced to suggest the motives which induced Orestes to murder his mother 'whom he after all revered'. The word Wink, 'hint', 'intimation', has given rise to much discussion. Fraedrich in *Zeitschrift für den deutschen Unterricht*, Vol. XI, pp. 598–601, refers the word to the recent oracle of Apollo (ll. 563 ff.) which promised to give to Orestes permanent release from the Furies in Tauris. The dejected and pessimistic Orestes finds now in his impending death the real meaning of the oracle. But it is highly improbable that Orestes should refer to the utterance of the oracle (stated in ll. 2113 ff.), the meaning of which seems to him now quite clear (cf. ll. 563–570), as Wink. Moreover, the context clearly indicates that he is here thinking not of his impending death, but of the murder of Clytæmnestra and all the terrible sufferings which it entailed. Therefore some critics (e.g. Kern, Althaus, and others) interpret Wink as referring to the command of Apollo to Orestes to murder his mother. According to the Greek tragedians such an express command was given by Apollo (cf. Intr. p. xv), but Orestes, after executing it, nevertheless became a prey to the Furies. So we find in the drama of Æschylus a glaring contradiction between the command of the god and the sufferings of Orestes, for, whether Orestes *obeyed or* disobeyed the command, punishment was sure to

follow. Cf. Intr. p. xxii. Such a command of Apollo, which must inevitably involve Orestes in sin and suffering, would have been incompatible with the fundamental religious views of Goethe's drama that the gods were wise, beneficent, and just (cf. ll. 522 ff. and note). Besides, nowhere in the drama is there any mention of such an *express* command of the oracle. We must therefore interpret Wink as referring to Orestes' gloomy belief that the gods *expected* him to avenge his father by killing his mother. Orestes, notwithstanding his natural feelings of piety for his mother, murdered her because, according to the religious views of his time, he believed that it was his sacred duty to do so. That no express command of Apollo is here implied is seen in Orestes' full confession of his crime to Iphigenia in ll. 1015 ff., where not a word is said about a command of the oracle.—**zu Grund' gerichtet,** because by doing that which he believed to be his sacred duty he became a prey to the Furies.—Cf. here the words of Admetus to Hercules in Wieland's *Alceste* III, 4:

„Ach, Freund! Sie (die Götter) haben mich
Verworfen! hörten nicht mein Flehn!"

See Intr. p. civ.

711. **Sie . . . gerichtet;** es auf etwas richten, is uncommon in modern German; we should now say auf etwas absehen, 'to aim at something', often in the bad sense 'to have a design against something', as here. Transl. 'They (the gods) are bent upon the ruin of the house of Tantalus'.

713 ff. A much quoted passage. The sentiments here are modern and not Greek, and well express the ideals of humanity of Goethe and many of his contemporaries.

717. **Es erbt,** now unusual for es vererbt sich. The earlier versions have: „Segen ist erblich, nicht Fluch".

720. **der uns verderbt;** verderben was formerly both strong and weak; the strong form was used intransitively, the weak transitively, as here. Since the 18th century the weak form occurs rarely, the strong form being used both transitively and intransitively, but in the present instance

we should now usually say der uns ins Verderben stürzt. Orestes refers to the fact that they have been captured and brought to the temple to be sacrificed at the altar of the goddess.

721 ff. Cf. here the address of Hercules to Admetus in Wieland's *Alceste* III, 4. Hercules like Pylades tries to raise the courage of his despondent friend with the following words:

„Freund, zweifle nicht!
Was Herkules verspricht,
Das wird er halten!
Ruf deinen Mut zurück!
Die Götter walten!
Ihr Beifall ist der Tugend Sold;
Sie sind den Frommen hold
Und werden dein Geschick
Bald umgestalten."

713–17. A very popular quotation.

721. erwarte, used here in the sense of warte or warte es ab.

722 ff. Bringst du die Schwester u. s. w. Note the ambiguous words of the oracle. Since Orestes and Pylades could not know of the existence of Iphigenia in Tauris, but believed that she was sacrificed in Aulis, they naturally interpreted the word Schwester to refer to the sister of Apollo, viz. to the image of Diana which was to be captured and brought to Delphi. In the Iphigenia of Euripides the image of the goddess, ἄγαλμα θεᾶς, is clearly referred to in the oracle of Apollo. Cf. note to ll. 610 ff.

723. Delphi, Greek Δελφοί, a small town of Phocis at the foot of Mount Parnassus and six miles from the Corinthian Gulf. It was world-renowned as the seat of the oracle of Pythian Apollo. In all the earlier versions Goethe wrote Delphos, a form used also by Gotter and Count Friedrich von Stolberg. According to Euripides the statue was to be brought to Athens. It has been suggested that this deviation from Euripides may be due to Goethe's intention to write *another* Iphigenia drama the scene of action of which

was to take place in Delphi, where Iphigenia and Orestes were to arrive after leaving Tauris. Cf. note to l. 49, also Kuno Fischer, *Goethes Iphigenie*, pp. 14–15.

724. **das edel denkt,** viz. the civilized Greeks as contrasted with the barbarous Scythians.

729. **geruh'gen;** geruhig is now obsolete, but in older German and in the 18th century it was frequently used for ruhig.

738. **seltsam,** 'by strange accident'.

739. **gezwungen,** viz. by the gods. The very fact that they have been captured and brought to the very shrine of the sacred image, seems to the optimistic Pylades a sure sign that the gods intend to help them in their dangerous undertaking.

740. **Rat,** here = Ratschluß.

742–3. A familiar quotation.

744–5. For the atonement of serious crimes the gods frequently required the execution of some very difficult and dangerous tasks for the benefit of humanity. Such, for instance, were the labors of Hercules, Perseus, and others. In the same way Pylades interprets the mission of Orestes in Tauris. Cf. Schiller's *Kampf mit dem Drachen*, ll. 74 ff., and see Intr. pp. xviii–xix.

746. **enden,** here for vollenden. Cf. note to l. 54.

750. **von meiner schweren Stirn,** a great improvement upon the earlier versions, which have „von meiner Seele". The change was probably made with reference to den Schwindel of the following line.

751 ff. Cf. note to l. 582.

757. **Furien,** has here three syllables.

762. **Ulyssen,** for the Latin form of the Greek Odysseus, cf. note to l. 40. The character of Pylades as conceived by Goethe actually resembles that of Odysseus in shrewdness and in fertility of resources when danger is imminent. We find a similar conception of his character in Euripides. Cf *Orestes*, ll. 1403 ff.

763–7. A much-quoted passage.

764 f. **Dem . . . nacharbeitet,** 'whom he emulates in his laborious ascent to Olympus'. Pylades seems to have here Hercules in mind, who after his death was admitted to Olympus. Cf. here the words of Hercules in Wieland's *Alceste* III, 3:

„Durch nie erhörte, durch den Erdensöhnen
Versagte Taten soll, o Vater Zeus,
Dein Sohn den Weg sich zum Olympus öffnen."

766. A similar sentiment is expressed by Odysseus in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, ll. 108 ff.:

ΝΕ. οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγεῖ δῆτα τὰ ψευδῆ λέγειν;
ΟΔ. οὔκ, εἰ τὸ σωθῆναί γε τὸ ψεῦδος φέρει.

'Ne. Thou thinkest it no shame, then, to speak falsehoods?
Od. No, if the falsehood brings deliverance.'
Jebb's Transl.

768. In his straightforwardness and love of truth Orestes resembles his sister Iphigenia. Cf. ll. 1405 ff. and Intr. pp. lxxxvii and c.

772–3. Cf. ll. 122 ff.

774. **Ein reines Herz,** not found in the earlier versions, and inserted to emphasize the reputation of Iphigenia among the Taurians.

777. **Amazonen,** a mythical race of warlike women who are supposed to have dwelt on the coast of the Black Sea in the region of the river Thermodon in Asia Minor, and hence opposite to the kingdom of Thoas. They played a prominent rôle in the Trojan war when, under their queen Penthesilea, they came to the assistance of the Trojans.

779. **lichtes Reich,** 'bright (gentle) sway', viz. her humane activity among the Taurians.

781. **breite Nacht** = die sich überallhin verbreitende Nacht, hence 'far-extending night'. The darkness of the curse enveloping Orestes extends so far that it has cast its deep shadows even upon the gentle sway of the priestess, for she has been ordered in their case to resume the long-discontinued human sacrifices.

782. **fromme Blutgier,** because it springs from the belief that human sacrifices are demanded by the goddess.

791–3. A much-quoted passage.

793. **wie = ebenso wie.**

SCENE 2.

After 800. **Sie nimmt ihm die Ketten ab.** Pylades is unfettered by the priestess because he is to be sacrificed to Diana, and it was regarded as a good omen if the victims were led to the altar without apparent constraint. Cf. ll. 926–930. So also in the drama of Euripides Iphigenia commands the attendants of Orestes and Pylades, ll. 469–470:

> 'Unbind the strangers' hands,
> That, being hallowed, they be chained no more.'

Cf. also *Maria Stuart*, ll. 2132–3.

802. **wenden ab,** subjunctive of wish.—**euch,** refers to both captives. She still hopes in some way to be able to save the strangers.

803–4. A familiar quotation. Cf. a similar sentiment in the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles (ll. 234–235). When Neoptolemus addresses Philoctetes in Greek, the latter exclaims:

> *ὦ φίλτατον φώνημα. Φεῦ τὸ καὶ λαβεῖν*
> *πρόσφθεγμα τοιοῦσδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ.*

'O well-loved sound! Ah that I should indeed be greeted by such a man, after so long a time!'

Jebb's Transl.

The whole situation here has also some resemblance to the scene in *Odyssey* VI, ll. 149 ff., where Odysseus stands in rapt admiration before Nausicaa and implores her help. The language of Pylades here has a Homeric coloring.

810. **dein,** the old form of the genit., now used only in poetry.

814. **göttergleiche,** cf. note to l. 45.

824 ff. The fictitious story told here by Pylades has a distinct purpose. From the point of view of Pylades, who has consciously chosen Odysseus as his model of cautious, circumspect conduct, it seems wisest to conceal their birth

and country until he becomes better acquainted with the real character of the priestess. His chief aim now is to arouse her sympathy, and fearing that she might shrink from a man who murdered his mother, he invents a story which has but a general resemblance to the real facts. He thus prepares the way for the next scene, in which Orestes himself reveals to the priestess his identity and his past life.—**Aus Kreta sind wir**; in giving Crete as their birthplace Pylades follows the example of Odysseus, who, in the fictitious stories he tells of himself, claims Crete three time as his birthplace. Cf. *Odyssey* XIII, ll. 256 ff., XIV, ll. 199 ff., and XIX, ll. 172 ff. Moreover, since Crete was far distant, had a mixed population, and was divided into a number of independent principalities (cf. *Æneid* III, l. 106), he avoids being discovered in his deception.—**des Adrasts**; in the 18th century the inflected forms of the genit. of proper names after a definite article were still quite common. Cf. Die Leiden des jungen Werthers. In Schlegel's drama *Geschwister auf Taurien*, I, 4, Orestes also relates a fictitious story to Iphigenia about his past life and fortunes.

831. **des Vaters Kraft** = der kräftige or mächtige Vater, a conscious imitation of the Homeric ἴς, βίη, or σθένος with the genit. of the proper name. Cf. *Iliad* II, l. 658, l. 666, and V, l. 781.

832. **zurücke**, older form for zurück, still occurring in poetry.

839. **der Delphische**, cf. note to l. 723.

840–41. Note his guarded and incomplete statement of the oracle of Apollo. Cf. ll. 722 ff. and 2113 ff. His purpose here is to intimate to the priestess that she would act against the will of the gods if she killed them. Wishing to arouse sympathy and confidence, Pylades naturally refrains from mentioning to the unknown priestess that Apollo commanded them to bring 'the sister' back to Greece.

844. **Fiel Troja?** The casual reference of Pylades to Troy in ll. 831–2 is the occasion of this question. The words Teurer Mann addressed to a stranger indicate her eager

interest in the war in which her father played a leading part.

845. **Es liegt,** 'it lies', viz. in ruins. The brevity of this answer is due to the fact that he wishes to return at once to the subject of their rescue, which is now uppermost in his mind.

846 f. Cf. note to ll. 840–41.

849 ff. **schone seiner u. s. w.;** in older German and in classic poetry schonen is as a rule followed by the genit. In modern prose it is followed by the acc.—Pylades, fearing that the straightforward Orestes (cf. l. 768) might reveal to her his whole past, tries to impress upon her the danger of questioning him too much.

856. **So groß,** cf. note to l. 118.

857. She wishes a full answer to her question in l. 844. In the earlier versions we read: „Vergiß es, bis du meiner Neugier genug getan."

858 ff. Note that Iphigenia herself related to Thoas the story of the house of Tantalus up to her experience in Aulis. Now Pylades in a very natural way resumes the story of the fortunes of her family at the point where she left off.

858. **Die hohe Stadt,** cf. Homeric *αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον*. See also Nestor's account of the Trojan war in *Odyssey* III, ll. 109–200.

861. **unsrer Besten,** cf. Homeric *ἀριστῆες*.

862. **Barbaren:** the Greeks called all non-Greek peoples 'barbarians' (*βάρβαροι*), viz. foreigners. The Greek tragic poets applied the term also to the Trojans, as Goethe does here.

863. **Achill;** Achilles is naturally mentioned first, for he was the foremost hero in the Trojan war, far-famed for his strength and beauty. According to one tradition he was killed in an assault upon the gates of Troy by an arrow of Paris directed by Apollo. For his relation to Iphigenia cf. Intr. p. xxviii.—**mit seinem schönen Freunde,** viz. Patroclus, whose beautiful eyes are mentioned in the *Iliad* XXIII, l. 66. He was slain in battle by Hector. Cf. *Iliad* XVI.

864. **Götterbilder** = Göttergestalten and refers to their supreme beauty. Cf. göttergleichen of l. 45 and note.

865. **Palamedes,** son of Nauplius of Eubœa, a man reputed for wisdom and bravery. Odysseus, whose hostility he had incurred, accused him of treason and incited the Greeks to stone him to death. Cf. Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, l. 198, and *Orestes*, l. 433.—**Ajax Telamons,** 'Ajax, son of Telamon', in imitation of the Greek *Αἴας ὁ Τελαμῶνος*. Next to Achilles he was the strongest hero among the Greeks who fought before Troy. When the arms of the dead Achilles, which were to be given to the bravest warrior, were adjudged to Odysseus, Ajax was so mortified that he became insane and put an end to his life. The drama of Sophocles, *Ajax*, treats of his insanity and death.

866. **des Vaterlandes Tag,** 'the light or sun of their fatherland', viz. they never returned home again. The phrase is an imitation of the Homeric *νόστιμον ἦμαρ*.

867–69. Lines spoken by Iphigenia apart.

869. **liebes Herz,** 'my heart', a literal translation of the Homeric *φίλον κῆρ* or *φίλον ἦτορ*. Cf. l. 923.

870–71. Cf. *Odyssey* V, ll. 306 f., and *Æneid* I, l. 94.

872. **wüste Schrecken,** viz. dangers at sea, such as befell Menelaus, Odysseus, and the Locrian Ajax on their return from Troy.—**ein traurig Ende,** refers to the murder of Agamemnon.

874. **Ein feindlich aufgebrachter Gott,** 'a god in hostile anger'. The poet may have here in mind the anger of Pallas Athena with the Locrian Ajax, who on the night of the sack of Troy tore away the priestess Cassandra from the altar of the goddess and then overturned her statue. As punishment for this offense his ship was wrecked at Cape Caphareus.

880 ff. Pylades purposely relates Agamemnon's death in a manner which cannot lay him open to the suspicion that he is at all interested in the house of Atreus.

884 f. **bekämpft vergebens u. s. w.,** viz. kämpft vergebens gegen den Eindruck des unerwarteten, ungeheuren Worts.

886. **Freundes**, here in the sense Gastfreundes (Greek ξένος), as the prose version shows.

887. **nachbarlich** = als Nachbarin.

888 f. Cf. the *Antigone* of Sophocles, l. 277.

892. **Vom Bad**, to be taken with stieg in the next line. In the earlier versions we find aus dem Bade steigend.—**erquickt und ruhig** are postpositive adjectives modifying der König. According to the *Odyssey* XI, ll. 409 ff., Ægisthus and Clytæmnestra killed him after a feast.

894 f. **ein faltenreich . . . Gewebe**, 'a garment with many folds, which artfully entangled itself'. This description of Agamemnon's murder was doubtless influenced by Æschylus. Cf. his *Agamemnon*, ll. 1382–3 (Dindorf's Text):

> ἄπειρον ἀμφίβληστρον, ὥσπερ ἰχθύων
> περιστιχίζω, πλοῦτον εἵματος κακόν.

'I threw around him a net, fastened at the ends, like one used for inclosing fishes,—a robe of fatal costliness.'

Cf. also *Choëphoræ*, ll. 493–4:

> *ΟΡ.*: πέδαις ἀχαλκεύτοις ὅθ' ἠρέθης, πάτερ.
> *ΗΛ.*: αἰσχρῶς τε βουλευτοῖσιν ἐν καλύμμασιν.

Orestes: When you were caught, my father, in shackles not forged in brass.
Electra: Yea, in a coverlet devised for your dishonor.
Paley's Translation.

Cf. also the *Electra* of Euripides, ll. 154 ff.

898 f. **schlug Ägisth ihn.** Goethe here deviates from the account of Æschylus according to which Clytæmnestra herself slew her husband. Cf. Intr. p. xxii.

899–900. **verhüllt . . . Fürst.** This sentence is lacking in the earlier versions. It is most natural to refer verhüllt to ll. 894–6. Agamemnon did not die a hero's death in the open battlefield, but verhüllt, viz. enveloped in the many folds of the garment which prevented him from seeing his enemy and defending himself. Sprenger (*Zeitschrift für den deutschen Unterricht*, IV, 373 f.), however, suggests that Goethe had here in mind the custom of ancient heroes to

cover their faces before receiving the death-stroke, as it is represented by Shakspeare in *Julius Cæsar*, Act V, Scene 3, where Cassius directs his slave Pindarus as follows:

> 'here take thou the hilts;
> And when my face is cover'd, as 'tis now,
> Guide thou the sword.'

But the whole context of the passage, especially the situation in ll. 894–6, does not favor this interpretation.—**Ging zu den Toten,** cf. the Greek εἰς Ἀΐδαο δόμους βαίνειν.

903. **eine böse Lust,** 'an illicit passion'.

904 ff. Goethe here follows the Greek tragic poets who, wishing to extenuate Clytæmnestra's guilt, represented her deed as prompted by her desire to avenge herself upon Agamemnon because he allowed her favorite daughter Iphigenia to be sacrificed in Aulis. Cf. the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, ll. 217–238, the *Electra* of Sophocles, ll. 527 ff., and the *Electra* of Euripides, l. 29. Also the French and German dramas ascribe to Clytæmnestra the same motive for her crime. Cf. La Grange-Chancel, III, 6; Crébillon, I, 4; and Gotter, II, 5. For Iphigenia's attitude toward her father cf. note to l. 424.

918, note. **sich verhüllend;** as it is not becoming for the priestess to betray her agitated feelings, she draws her veil over her head and departs in order to recover her self-possession. So also Timanthes (about 400 B.C.) in his celebrated picture of Iphigenia's sacrifice in Aulis represented Agamemnon as standing aside, with covered face, so as not to be obliged to look upon the sacrifice of his daughter. The ancient artist used this device to avoid representing the mental agony of a hero who was to lead the Greek hosts against Troy. Cf. Lessing's fine discussion of this picture in *Laokoon*, Chap. II. See also *Odyssey* VIII, ll. 83 ff.

919 ff. Cf. here Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 660 ff.

> τίς ἐστιν ἡ νεᾶνις; ὡς Ἑλληνικῶς
> ἀνήρεθ' ἡμᾶς τούς τ' ἐν Ἰλίῳ πόνους
> νόστον τ' Ἀχαιῶν τόν τ' ἐν οἰωνοῖς σοφὸν

Κάλχαντ' Ἀχιλλέως τ' ὄνομα, καὶ τὸν ἄθλιον
Ἀγαμέμνον' ὡς ᾤκτειρεν ἠρώτα τέ με
γυναῖκα παῖδάς τ'.

'Who is the maiden? With how Greek a heart
She asked us of the toils in Ilium,
The host's home-coming, Kalchas the wise seer
Of birds, Achilles' name. How pitied she
Agamemnon's wretched fate, and questioned me
Touching his wife, his children!'

923. **Hierher verkauft**; in the versions of 1779 and 1780 „Durch Sklaverei" is added. He thinks that she may have been captured by pirates or taken prisoner in war.—**liebes Herz**, cf. note to l. 869.

Act III, Scene 1.

We must assume that, while Iphigenia withdrew to recover her self-possession, Pylades went to his friend to inform him of his interview with the priestess and of her deep interest in the fate of Agamemnon. It is not clear why Orestes appears here without Pylades; in the drama of Euripides they appear before the priestess together. Possibly Pylades sent out his friend to meet Iphigenia alone in the hope that Orestes, as the more unfortunate one, may the more effectively work upon her sympathies. However this may be, the poet deemed it necessary that Orestes and Iphigenia meet alone, so that the recognition scene may develop fully and naturally without the help or interference of the worldly Pylades.

926 ff. Pylades informed Iphigenia of the misfortunes and sufferings of his friend, and asked her to treat him with forbearance (cf. ll. 848–855). She accordingly addresses him with much more sympathy than she did Pylades.—**deine Bande**, cf. note to l. 800.

927. **schmerzlichern**, viz. more painful than captivity, namely death.

928 ff. **Die Freiheit . . . ist wie der letzte lichte Lebensblick u. s. w.** It is a common experience that sick people when

on the point of death often show a remarkable lucidity of spirit, which like the last flickering of light may be regarded as 'death's herald'. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet* V, 3, ll. 88–90:

> 'How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have they been merry! which their keepers call
> A lightning before death.'

932. **ihr,** viz. Orestes and Pylades.

934–6. **niemand . . . darf . . . euer Haupt . . . berühren.** Cf. note to l. 606.

939. **Folgerin,** for Nachfolgerin. Cf. note to l. 161.

941. **der letzte,** 'the lowest'.

942. **Vatergötter,** formed after the Greek θεοὶ πατρῷοι, 'the household gods' which were placed on the hearth as symbols of domestic peace. This hearth was the altar before which all members of the family, including the slaves, assembled for worship or for any act requiring religious consecration.—**streifte,** 'barely touched in passing', hence who was but distantly connected with the family.

946. **von Eltern her,** viz. im Vaterhause.

948. **Mit neuer, schöner Hoffnung;** Iphigenia thinks that the two Greek strangers who came to Tauris at the express command of Apollo may give her the long-prayed-for opportunity of returning to Greece.

951. **gleich einer Himmlischen;** these words indicate the impression which the manner and personality of Iphigenia have made upon Orestes. Cf. ll. 814 and 1127, and Intr. p. lxxxvii.

952. **Du sollst mich kennen;** note the significant ambiguity of this expression by which the poet hints at the coming recognition. Cf. also 932 ff. and 941 ff. Iphigenia, feeling instinctively drawn to Orestes, is less reserved toward him than she was toward Pylades. When the latter in ll. 813 f. asked about her descent, she gave him an evasive answer.—**Jetzo,** an archaic form for jetzt, now used only in poetry.

956. **stumm empfing,** in contrast to the loud joy and triumph with which the other returning heroes may have been greeted. Cf. ll. 872–4.

958–964. These lines are wanting in the earlier versions

and show unmistakably the influence of classic art upon the poet. Cf. Intr. pp. lxi ff.

960 ff. The conception here of Olympus as the abode of heroes is not antique, for only a few heroes like Hercules, Theseus, Castor and Pollux were after death admitted to Olympus.

964. For Iphigenia's veneration for her father cf. note to ll. 401 ff.

966. **Frauen**, an old weak genit. sing. Cf. note to l. 24.

967. **Weh dir u. s. w.** It is to be noted that, whereas Iphigenia tried to conceal her agitation in the presence of Pylades (cf. note to l. 918), she gives full expression to her pain before Orestes. Cf. note to l. 952.

968 ff. **Tantals Enkel**, viz. Atreus and Thyestes. The simile drawn here is between the dissemination of destructive weeds through the scattering of their seeds and the constant propagation of crime in the race of Tantalus through the spirit of hate engendered in the family by Atreus and Thyestes. In the prose version of 1781 this thought is expressed as follows: „So haben Tantals Enkel den Fluch, gleich einem unvertilgbaren Unkraut mit voller Hand gesät, und jedem ihrer Kinder wieder einen Mörder zur ewigen Wechselwut erzeugt." For the crimes of Atreus and Thyestes and their children cf. Intr. pp. xiii–xiv. Cf. also Schiller's *Piccolomini*, ll. 2452–3.

970. **wüste Häupter**; wüst is used here in the South German sense of widerwärtig, häßlich, garstig.

972 f. **Den Kindeskindern** u. s. w., ominous words applying not only to Orestes but also to Iphigenia herself, who will soon discover in the stranger she has been commanded to sacrifice her own brother.

977 f. **Das holde Kind**; these words were added in the final version and refer to Iphigenia's last impression of Orestes when she was brought by her mother to Aulis. Orestes was then a child in arms. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 834.—**bestimmt des Vaters Rächer dereinst zu sein.** These words are not to be interpreted as indicating that Iphigenia approves or justifies the practice of revenge. Such an inter-

pretation would be inconsistent with her religious and moral convictions. She refers here merely to the prevailing views of her countrymen according to which the son had to avenge the murder of his father. Cf. note to l. 710. She probably thinks here only of the murder of Ægisthus by Orestes, for in l. 998 she implies that she expected Clytæmnestra to commit suicide. Cf. note to ll. 1000 ff.

978 f. wie ist Orest u. s. w. She fears that Ægisthus, to escape the revenge of Orestes, may have slain him. The prose version of 1781 reads: „Wie ist des großen Stammes letzte Pflanze, den Mordgesinnten ein aufkeimender gefährlicher Rächer, wie ist Orest dem Schreckenstag' entgangen?"

980. des Avernus Netzen; Avernus, now called *Lago d'Averno*, is a small lake in Campania in Lower Italy, a few miles west of Naples, whose poisonous exhalations made the Romans believe that it was the entrance to the infernal regions. Hence Avernus was used by the Romans to designate the lower world. Cf. *Æneid* VI, ll. 237. ff—Netzen, either in its general meaning of 'snares' of death, or possibly a reference to the manner of Agamemnon's death as described by Pylades in ll. 894 ff. For Goethe's preference for Latin mythological names cf. note to l. 40.

982 ff. For Iphigenia's prayer cf. note to ll. 51 ff.

985. gastfreundlich, adverb modifying verbunden, 'by ties of hospitality'. Cf. nachbarlich of l. 887.

989–90. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 1121:

τὸ δὲ μετ' εὐτυχίαν κακοῦσθαι θνατοῖς βαρὺς αἰών.

'But whom ruin, in happiness ambushed, surpriseth,
Ah, their stroke smiteth keen!'

992 ff. Another case of stichomythy. Cf. note to ll. 74–77.

996. weder . . . weder, for the more regular weder . . . noch. Cf. *Faust* Pt. I, l. 2607. Iphigenia means that Clytæmnestra is irreparably lost. It is useless for her to hope that her mother was saved, or to fear for her fate, for, as an accomplice in the murder of her husband, she was, according to the

prevailing view, doomed by the gods. These words are uttered by Iphigenia not in a spirit of indifference—which would be contrary to her nature—but with a feeling of painful resignation. The thought of this line is expressed more clearly in the prose version of 1781: „Die sei den Göttern überlassen. Hoffnung und Furcht hilft dem Verbrecher nicht."

997. **Auch**, here an adverbial conjunction, denoting that the truth of the preceding statement is admitted, and connecting the present sentence with the preceding one. 'And indeed' (viz. it is true what you say that she is irreparably lost, for) 'she departed from the land of hope' (viz. from the earth).

998. **Vergoß sie u. s. w.** Cf. the death of Hippodamia ll. 348 f. Also Jocasta in *Œdipus Tyrannus*, ll. 1237 ff., commits suicide upon discovering her crime.

1000 ff. The vague words of the preceding line arouse in her the horrible suspicion that Orestes may have killed his mother. Thus far the thought never occurred to her. Cf. note to ll. 977 f.

1001. **tausendfältig**, probably an adverb as is seen from the prose version of 1781: „Die Ungewißheit schlägt mit tausendfältigem Verdacht mir an das Haupt." However, some commentators take it as an adj. modifying Ungewißheit. Cf. here Schiller's *Wallensteins Tod*, ll. 1473–4.

1005. **klanglos-dumpfe**, 'soundless and dreary', viz. a realm where silence reigns and where therefore the crime of Orestes would not be reported. For a similar bold compound cf. traurig-unwilligen of l. 552.—**Höhlenreich der Nacht**, viz. Hades, which was conceived as a vast cavernous realm in which ancient Mother Night dwelt.

1007. **dein holder Mund**; hold is used here in its older sense of gnädig, huldreich. Cf. note to l. 951.

1009 ff. Notice that Orestes takes up the account of the fortunes of his family where Pylades broke off, l. 917. Thus from the accounts of Iphigenia, Pylades, and Orestes we get a complete statement of the crimes of the race of Tantalus. Cf. note to ll. 858 ff. In the following story of Orestes Goethe follows in the main the *Electra* of Sophocles.

1011. Schwäher, archaic, here used in the sense of Schwager, though its original sense is that of Schwiegervater. Cf. Intr. p. xv.

1015 ff. It is to be noted that Orestes says here nothing of a command of Apollo to slay his mother. Cf. note to l. 710.

1017 ff. Cf. here Hyginus, Fable CXIX.

1020 f. Wohl empfänget sie u. s. w. Clytæmnestra, fearing the revenge of Orestes, was naturally pleased with the news of his death.

1023 ff. Cf. here the *Electra* of Sophocles, ll. 1232 ff., and the *Electra* of Euripides, ll. 1066–92.

1024 f. Cf. l. 708 and note. According to the following account the neglected, embittered, and passionate Electra was the real avenger of her father, while Orestes was but her tool. Thus the whole family is represented as involved in the crime with the exception of Iphigenia.

1025. in sich zurückgebrannt war, 'had burnt low', 'had been stifled'.

1028. Supply the article den before oftgewaschnen Boden; des . . . Blutes depends upon Spur.—Goethe refers here to the superstition that the blood-stains of wantonly murdered persons can never be entirely obliterated.

1029. Cf. the *Electra* of Euripides, ll. 318–319:

αἷμα δ' ἔτι πατρὸς κατὰ στέγας
μέλαν σέσηπεν·

'And yet my sire's blood 'neath the roofs,
A dark clot festers!'

1032 ff. Cf. the *Electra* of Sophocles, ll. 185 ff., where Electra says: 'Nay, the best part of my life hath passed away from me in hopelessness, and I have no strength left; I, who am pining away without children, — whom no loving champion shields, — but, like some despised alien, I serve in the halls of my father, clad in this mean garb and standing at a meagre board.' Jebb's Transl. Cf. also the *Electra* of *Euripides*, ll. 60–61.

1035 **stiefgewordnen**, a word coined by Goethe and meaning: zur Stiefmutter gewordenen Mutter.—**der Geschwister warteten**; the genit. after warten is now poetic, though in older German warten was regularly followed by the genit.—This line has six feet.

1036–7. These lines were added in Italy. Goethe assumes here that Electra gave to Orestes the same dagger with which the previous crimes of the family had been committed. Fatal weapons, inherited from generation to generation, play frequently a rôle in ancient and modern dramas. Cf. the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides and of Seneca, Crébillon's *Électre* and Voltaire's *Oreste*, and the *Schicksalstragödien* of Zacharias Werner, Müllner, and Houwald. The ax with which Agamemnon and Clytæmnestra had been slain was to play a prominent part in Goethe's proposed drama *Iphigenie in Delphi*. Cf. Appendix.

1037. A line of six feet.

1038. This brief statement of the murder of Clytæmnestra is very effective. Cf. ll. 967 and 982. As Orestes does not feel any pangs of conscience about the murder of Ægisthus, the latter is not even mentioned.

1039. **Tag**, poetic for Leben.

1046. **Der Flamme gleich**, viz. like the pure and steady flame at the altar of Diana.

1050. It is to be noted that Iphigenia does not utter here a single word of condemnation against him. Her question here shows the deepest concern and sympathy for his fate. Cf. Intr. p. lxxxviii.

1052 ff. The conception here is that the spirit of the murdered Clytæmnestra rose from her reeking blood. The incomplete verse in l. 1053, indicating a long pause, well expresses the horror of Orestes as the picture rises before his imagination. The historic presents in the following lines show how vividly the phantoms of his tortured conscience now live before him.

1054. **der Nacht uralten Töchtern**, viz. the Erinyes or Furies. Goethe, following the practice of the Greek poets, purposely

avoids mentioning their real names. Cf. note to l. 564. They are called **uralte Töchter der Nacht** (cf. the Greek *Νυκτὸς παλαιαὶ παῖδες* in the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, l. 69) because they existed long before the Olympian gods, having according to some traditions sprung from Erebus (darkness) and Night.

1055–6. Lines of four feet and of mixed metre. Line 1055 consists of three iambics and one anapæst, and l. 1056 of one iambic and three anapaests:

⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ — | ⏑ ⏑ —
⏑ — | ⏑ ⏑ — | ⏑ ⏑ — | ⏑ ⏑ —

This irregular metre serves to express the strong mental agitation of Orestes.—**geweiht**, like the Latin *sacer*, 'consecrated' or 'devoted' to your persecution and destruction. Also in the *Eumenides* of Æschylus the ghost of Clytæmnestra incites the Furies against Orestes.

1060. Notice the anapæst in the fifth foot.

1061. **Der Zweifel und die Reue** are here personified and conceived as companions of the Furies. **Zweifel** is the doubt in the mind of Orestes whether he correctly understood what he thought to be the hint of the gods (cf. note to l. 710) and therefore whether the commission of the deed was necessary and just. Such doubt in the justice of the deed gives rise to **Reue**. Cf. *Æneid* VI, l. 274: *Luctus et ultrices . . . Curae*—which are also conceived by Virgil as dwelling in Orcus.

1062. **Acheron**, one of the chief rivers in the lower world (cf. *Odyssey* X, l. 513), is here used to designate the lower world in general, which, according to the conception of the ancients, is permeated with dense vapors. Cf. *Æneid* VI, ll. 295 ff.

1067. **gottbesäten**, 'heaven-sown', for all life and the blessings of the earth are conceived as coming from the gods.

1068. **ein alter Fluch**, not found in the earlier versions. The Furies belonged to the race of the older divinities (cf. note to l. 1054), and hence in the great battle between the

Olympic gods and the Titans (cf. note to l. 328) they sided with the latter. As punishment they were banished by the Olympians to Hades, and were allowed to emerge only when unnatural crimes were to be avenged. Cf. note to l. 564.

1071–72. Cf. ll. 836–855.

1079. **der List gewohnt,** for the now more usual *an* List gewöhnt. Orestes is thinking of Pylades. Cf. ll. 762 ff. and the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, ll. 609 ff.

1080–81. Although Orestes has still no idea of Iphigenia's identity, her strong expressions of sympathy for him and the house of Agamemnon (cf. note to l. 1050 and ll. 1071–2 and 1074–75) make it impossible for him to treat her as a stranger. He instinctively feels that a stronger bond exists between them. Besides, cunning is as foreign to him as it is to Iphigenia. Cf. Intr. pp. lxxxvii-lxxxviii.

1081. This line was purposely left unfinished. Orestes makes here a long pause before revealing his identity. The following confession of Orestes recalls Goethe's frequent confessions of his inner life and sufferings to Frau von Stein. Cf. here his letter to her of June 5, 1780, and note to l. 139. See also Intr. pp. lxxix ff.

1083. **Senkt nach der Grube sich;** the poet seems to have here in mind the picture of a drooping flower.—Grube, poetic for Grabe.

1087. This impression was perhaps given to him by Iphigenia's words in ll. 941 ff.

1088. **Rat,** here in the sense of Anschlag, Plan. Possibly Pylades informed Orestes of his plan to work upon the sympathy of Iphigenia and induce her to aid them in their flight. Cf. ll. 919 ff. and introductory note to the present scene.

1089. **vom Fels;** to-day Fels is a weak noun. Orestes refers here to the rock on which the temple is situated. Cf. introductory note to Act. I, Scene 1. He expects to die the usual death of strangers captured in Tauris, viz. to be sacrificed in the temple and then be hurled down from the rock into the sea. This mode of death was probably sug-

gested to Goethe by Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 626. When Orestes asks the priestess what kind of burial should be allotted to him, she answers:

πῦρ ἱερὸν ἔνδον χάσμα τ' εὐρωπὸν πέτρας.

'A sacred fire within (the temple) and a rocky chasm.'
Buchheim.

Some critics (Lewes, Hermann, Stahr, and Paul Heyse) regard Iphigenia's conduct here as somewhat cold and unnatural. They find it surprising that instead of bursting forth into exultant joy upon discovering that her own brother stands before her, she offers a long prayer to the gods. But a wild outburst of joy would not have been at all in keeping with Goethe's conception of her character. Though endowed with the keenest and deepest sensibilities, her character and her calling as a priestess have given a noble dignity and solemnity to all her actions and utterances. To a woman of her deep religious sense it is but natural to offer first her thanks to the gods whom she has served so long in childlike devotion, who have delivered her from death, and to whose benevolence she ascribes her present good fortune. That passionate outbursts are foreign to her nature, we see in her conduct toward Thoas when she is commanded by him to reintroduce the human sacrifices, and in the manner she receives the terrible news of her father's death (ll. 880 ff.) and the joyful information that Orestes and Electra still live (ll. 982 ff.). In all these situations she is profoundly affected, but her words express everywhere the resignation and the dignity of the true priestess. Cf. note to l. 918.

1091. **bringe Fluch u. s. w.**, because from the point of view of the Greeks such a death would be a violation of the sacred rights of hospitality.

1093. Stage Direction. **Er entfernt sich.** Some critics think that Orestes withdraws here to inform Pylades of his resolution to die, and of his wish that the priestess and Pylades should devise some means for their own escape (*cf. ll.* 1085 ff.). But it is hardly necessary to assume all

this, as his intense suffering at this moment is a sufficient cause for his withdrawal.—We must assume a long pause after l. 1093, in which Iphigenia tries to regain her composure.

1094 ff. The earlier versions of this famous prayer are quite different. The final form is vastly superior in grandeur of conception and in artistic execution, and furnishes a striking example of the influence which Italian life and art exerted upon the poet. Cf. Intr. pp. lxi ff. The personification of Erfüllung, though it bears some resemblance to the Roman *Fortuna* and *Abundantia*, is essentially a new mythological creation of Goethe.

1095. **Des größten Vaters**, viz. Zeus. Cf. *Jupiter optimus maximus.*

1107 f. **wenn**, here in the sense of **während**. Transl. 'whilst the starry and misty veil of every evening conceals from us the view (of to-morrow)'.

1108 ff. Cf. *Tasso*, ll. 1074–81; also *Hermann und Dorothea*, V, ll. 69–70.

1115 f. **wie den Schatten des . . . Freundes**, probably a reference to *Iliad* XXIII, ll. 99 ff., where in a dream Achilles sees the spirit of Patroclus, who, however, vanishes when Achilles tries to embrace him.

1116. **eitel**, like the Latin *inanis*, **schattenhaft, wesenlos**, referring to the shades of the lower world.

1117. **dreifach**, possibly a reminiscence of *Odyssey* XI, ll. 204 ff., where Odysseus tries in vain three times to embrace the shade of his mother in the lower world. Cf. also *Æneid* VI, ll. 700 ff.

1118 ff. Orestes has seen the priestess lift up her hands in prayer, and believes that she has accepted his advice to return to Greece (cf. ll. 1085 ff.), and now prays to the gods to aid them in their flight. He returns to beg her not to include him in her prayer, for he feels that his case is hopeless, that the Furies will never desist from their pursuit, and that therefore it would be a relief to him to die in Tauris. Cf. ll. 561 ff.

1118. A line of six feet.

1121. Cf. ll. 657 ff. and 780 ff.

1123. **Mit nichten**, 'by no means'. He utterly misunderstands her words.

1125. **deinen Schleier**, her veil or her priestly garment as a symbol of her purity and innocence. He means that even if the pure priestess took him under her special protection, she could not shield him from the Furies.

1126. **Du birgst**, instead of the preterite subjunctive **du bärgest**, to denote the vividness and certainty with which Orestes conceives the situation.—**der immer Wachen**, another euphemistic name for the Furies. Cf. note to l. 1054 and ll. 1160, 1169, etc.

1129. **ehrnen Füßen**, an imitation of the Greek χαλκόπους Ἐρινύς, 'the Erinyes with brazen feet' (cf. *Electra* of Sophocles, l. 490). The feet of the Furies are called brazen because they are untiring in the pursuit of their victim, and **frech** because nothing can deter them. Cf. *Braut von Messina*, l. 2415, and note to l. 564.

1132. **Ihr gräßliches Gelächter**; these words, which suggest mockery and malice, describe the impression the Furies make upon the bewildered mind of Orestes. Æschylus represents them as moaning and barking like dogs eager for their prey. Cf. the *Eumenides*, ll. 116 ff.

1136. **Schlangenhäupter**, cf. note to l. 564; also the *Choëphoræ* of Æschylus, ll. 1048 ff., and the *Orestes* of Euripides, ll. 255 ff.

1141. **zu neuer Hoffnung**; she implies that she will try to save him from death.

1142–3. In his mental agony Orestes cannot understand Iphigenia. The only light of hope for him is the pale gleam of the river of death which he sees through the 'smoke and vapor' of the lower world. Cf. note to ll. 1118 ff.

1143. **Des Totenflusses**, viz. Acheron. Cf. note to l. 1062. —**zur Hölle**, cf. note to l. 629.

1144. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 561 ff.

1145 ff. In the drama of La Grange-Chancel, *Oreste et*

Pylade **III, 6, Orestes also** says when the name of Iphigenia is mentioned:

'Heureusement pour elle, elle a perdu sa vie.'

1148–9. The questions of Iphigenia recall to Orestes all the memories of his horrible past, so that her words affect him like the pursuit of the Furies. This passage seems to have been influenced by the *Orestes* of Euripides, ll. 264–5, where Orestes says to Electra:

μέθες· μί᾿ οὖσα τῶν ἐμῶν Ἐρινύων,
μέσον μ᾿ ὀχμάζεις, ὡς βάλῃς ἐς Τάρταρον

'Unhand me!—of mine Haunting Fiends thou art—
Dost grip my waist to hurl me into hell!'

1151–3. **sich die letzten Kohlen . . . verglimmen**; sich verglimmen means here glimmend sich ausbrennen, glimmend sich verzehren, 'to burn out slowly'; verglimmen is really an intransitive verb, so that the reflexive here is very unusual. Grimm's Dict., Vol. XII, p. 461, says: „das Zeitwort ist intransitiv, Goethe hat in Anlehnung an Wörter wie sich verzehren zwar ein Reflexivum entwickelt, doch scheint dies ohne Nachahmung geblieben zu sein." By constantly blowing the ashes of oblivion from his soul the Furies prevent the fire of remorse within him from ever being extinguished. For a similar metaphor cf. Goethe's *Faust* Pt. I, ll. 3803–7.

1154 **Höllenschwefel**, unknown to classical Hades. Cf. Goethe's *Faust* Pt. II, ll. 7955–6.

1156. **Rauchwerk**, poetic for Räucherwerk and contrasted with Höllenschwefel, l. 1154.

1162–3. **Gorgone**, viz. Medusa, whose head was so fearful to behold that whoever looked at it was changed into stone. The hero Perseus killed her with averted face, and Athena afterward placed the severed head upon her shield to frighten her enemies.

1164 ff. A very important passage. The pure sister, the only innocent member of the guilty family, she who above all others has the right to condemn Orestes for the murder of her mother, forgives him and wishes to save him. In his distracted frame of mind he cannot comprehend her thought, and least of all the meaning of der reinen Schwester Segens-

wort. All that he seems to hear and understand are her words: wenn vergoßnen Mutterblutes Stimme, which stir to the utmost his pangs of conscience. Cf. Intr. p. lxxxviii.

1168. **Es ruft! es ruft!** es refers probably to vergoßnen Mutterblutes of l. 1164. These words of Iphigenia produce in him the terrible illusion that his mother's voice is calling him down to Hades.

1170–71. Cf. *Jungfrau v. Orleans*, ll. 1799–1800.

1172. **Es zeigt sich** u. s. w. 'It', viz. what I am, your sister, 'is revealed in your inmost heart'. Iphigenia ascribes his terrible agitation to his instinctive feeling that it is his sister who is speaking to him.

1174. **Laß! Hinweg!** Iphigenia wishes here to embrace her brother, but he shrinks from her. W. v. Kaulbach in his famous Goethe-Gallerie has represented this situation.

1176. **Wie von Kreusas Brautkleid u. s. w.** Creüsa was the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. When Jason was about to marry her, the abandoned Medea, his first wife, through whose help he had brought the Golden Fleece to Greece, revenged herself in a fearful manner. She sent to Creüsa a poisoned robe which burst into flames when she put it on and destroyed her, her father, and the whole royal palace. Both Euripides and the Austrian poet Grillparzer have dramatized this theme.

1178 f. **Wie Herkules u. s. w.** The mention of Creüsa's fatal garment recalls to Orestes the death of Hercules. When the Centaur Nessus tried to abduct Deïanira, the wife of Hercules, he was mortally wounded by the latter. The dying Centaur, to avenge himself, gave to Deïanira some of his blood, which, he assured her, she could always use as a charm for regaining the affection of her husband. Deïanira, when she was at one time tormented by jealous misgivings, sent to Hercules a garment which she had anointed with the blood of Nessus. When the hero donned the garment, it at once penetrated his body. In fearful agony and convinced that cure was hopeless, he had himself carried to Mt. Œta, where, at his own command, a funeral pyre was erected, upon which he

was burned. Sophocles dramatized this theme in the tragedy *The Trachinian Women* (*Αἱ Τραχίνιαι*).

1179. **in mich verschlossen,** 'wrapped up in myself', hence solitary, cut off from all mankind, like the dying Hercules.

1182. **O löse meine Zweifel,** viz. her doubts whether he is really her brother, because his conduct toward her, after she had disclosed to him her identity, naturally fills her with surprise and fear. In the prose version of 1781 this thought is more clearly expressed: „Lös' meine Zweifel und gib mir eine treue glückliche Gewißheit."

1184. **ein Rad' von Freud' und Schmerz,** well expresses her conflicting emotions. She is rejoiced to have found him, and grieved at his condition and strange conduct.

1185 ff. **Von dem fremden Manne u. s. w.** She means: When you act so like a stranger, I shrink from you with a shudder, as I do before all strangers, and yet my innermost feeling assures me that you *are* my brother and irresistibly draws me toward you. This passage strongly resembles the words of Electra in Gotter's drama *Orest und Elektra*, IV, 5:

„Dein Herz fliegt meinem zu;
Dein Blick zeugt wider dich—Du bist mein Bruder, du!"

1188. **Lyäens Tempel;** Lyæus (Greek *Λυαῖος*, 'deliverer from care') is an epithet of Dionysus (Bacchus), the god of wine, whose priestesses worshipped him in orgies and mad revelries. In his bewilderment Orestes mistakes the affectionate conduct of Iphigenia for the ravings of a Bacchante.

1189. **Unbändig-heil'ge Wut,** 'the sacred unrestrained frenzy'. The madness of the Bacchantes in the dissolute festivals of Dionysus is called 'sacred' because it was attributed to the influence of the god himself.

1192. **Der Seligkeit,** dat. after sich öffnet (l. 1191); **dem Liebsten,** dat. where in English we should have a possessive with **das Haupt** (l. 1193).

1196. Here she again tries to embrace him.

1197. **vom Parnaß;** Parnassus is a mountain range in

Greece about 80 miles northwest of Athens in ancient Phocis near Delphi.—**die ew'ge Quelle**, viz. the famous fountain of Castalia on the slope of Mt. Parnassus, flowing down to Delphi. Its waters were sacred to Apollo and the Muses, and were used for the holy rites of the temple.

1198. **ins goldne Tal**, cf. note to l. 474.

1199. **wie**; we should expect *als* after the comparative **heller**, l. 1196, but Goethe and other writers frequently use **wie** after a comparative.

1201 ff. Orestes is so overwhelmed by the consciousness of his guilt that he is incapable of any other thought than that he is condemned by the gods, and utterly unworthy of any one's sympathy or affection. He cannot realize the situation, and least of all understand Iphigenia's feelings. Therefore, when she finally embraces him, he persists in misinterpreting her conduct as an expression of unholy love, and warns her of the dangers of transgressing the laws of the chaste goddess Diana whom she serves.

1207. **das schöne Glück**, viz. her love.

1215. **O nehmt u. s. w.**, an appeal to the gods, as is seen from the first metrical version of the drama:

„O nehmt, ihr Götter, nehmt
Den Wahn ihm von dem starren Aug!"

Cf. note to ll. 51 ff.

1217. **dreifach**, used here as often by Homer and Virgil in an intensive sense. Transl. 'completely'.

1217 ff. Again Iphigenia tries to make him realize her identity and dispel his gloom which borders on insanity. Her miraculous escape from death in Aulis and her appointment as priestess of Diana in Tauris are to her unmistakable signs of the beneficent purposes of the gods toward her and Orestes, for since she, his sister, is now priestess, she will surely do everything to save him.

1223 ff. The morbid Orestes cannot grasp the hope implied in the last statement of Iphigenia (l. 1222). On the contrary, to him her words mean that he is hopelessly doomed.

The fact that she who claims to be his loving sister is also the priestess who has been commanded to slay him, he regards as the surest proof of her identity. He finds in this horrible coincidence the most obvious confirmation of the unrelenting hatred of the gods against him and his race. In his pessimism he now believes that the angry gods have determined to involve all the members of the house of Atreus in guilt and ruin, that they saved his innocent sister from death in Aulis and appointed her priestess in Tauris only to compel her in that capacity to slay her brother. Here we find the climax of his despair.

1229. Cf. ll. 342–5 and ll. 367–370 and notes.

1231 ff. He wishes to die childless, fearing that if he had children, the wrath of the gods might extend also to them. And so he also advises Iphigenia not to love life too much, but follow him to Hades.

1235. **Wie sich u. s. w.**; **sich** is to be taken with **verschlingen** in the next line. It is an old superstition that dragons were engendered in foul swamps and devoured each other. Cf. Schiller's ballad: *Der Kampf mit dem Drachen*, l. 124.

1237. **das wütende Geschlecht**, viz. the race of Tantalus.

1240 ff. **Mit solchen Blicken u. s. w.** Some commentators assert that the poet intended to indicate by these words that Iphigenia resembled her mother. But this is hardly probable, for if such a resemblance existed, it surely would have been noticed before by Pylades and Orestes. Moreover, it would have constantly recalled to Orestes his past crime after he and his sister had returned to Mycenæ,—and this certainly could not have been the intention of the poet. And so it is better to assume that there is something in the pitiful manner and the look of intense anxiety of Iphigenia which suggests to him the appearance of his mother at the time of the murder, and recalls to him more vividly than ever that scene of horror.

1243 ff. **unwill'ger Geist**, viz. the spirit of Clytæmnestra. Cf. note to ll. 1052 ff.—Gotter's *Orest und Elektra* IV, 4, may have had some influence upon this passage. Electra, when

about to attack her brother, imagines that she is in Hades and exclaims:

„Euch ruf' ich! hört geneigt,
Ihr Eumeniden, mich! Seid meine Götter! steigt
Der Rache Töchter, steigt empor ans Licht! verlasset
Den Tartarus! Hier—hier ist euer Sitz—man hasset
Hier tötlicher, als dort.—Auf greuelvoller Bahn
Geh', euch zur Seite, Tod, Entsetzen euch voran!
Zückt eure Dolche! schwingt die Fackeln, daß die Funken
Weit über Argos sprühn!"—

1244. **Im Kreis geschlossen,** 'closed in a circle', hence surrounding me, making my escape impossible. In the *Eumenides* of Æschylus the Furies surround the temple of Apollo where Orestes has sought refuge. When he is about to leave, the shade of Clytæmnestra appears and commands the Furies not to relent in their pursuit of Orestes.

1246. **gräßlichsten,** because a loving and beloved sister is compelled to slay her brother. Cf. note to ll. 1223 ff.

1247. **ihren,** 'their', referring to Haß und Rache, which are personified. It may, however, refer proleptically to Schwester of the next line.

1248 f. Cf. here the similar words of Orestes in Schlegel's drama *Geschwister auf Taurien* IV, 4:

„So war die Schwester mir zur Mörderin bestimmt."

1249 ff. Orestes, laboring under the hallucination that he is about to be sacrificed by his sister, is on the verge of insanity. The only bond between him and reality is Iphigenia. When he looks upon her and finds her in tears, a sudden feeling of love for her takes possession of him and is strong enough to dispel for a moment the dread creations of his morbid fancy. He forgets himself and feels the deepest pity for her who, he believes, is obliged by the hostile gods to slay him. This suddenly awakened love for his pure sister who, instead of condemning, pardoned him and treated him with the greatest tenderness and compassion, is the first suggestion of his subsequent mental restoration.—**Weine nicht!** Note here the sudden change of Orestes

from intensest excitement to gentle sadness and pity, a change peculiar to some forms of insanity. Similar sudden changes of mood we find in the insane Gretchen in the Prison Scene of *Faust*. Cf. *Faust* Pt. I, ll. 4432–40; 4484 ff.; 4544–62; 4580–95, etc.—The words of Orestes here recall a similar passage in Gotter's drama. Electra, bidding her sister farewell, says, IV, 3:

„Noch keine Schwestern hatten
Sich so geliebt, als wir—(in Begeisterung) Ich komm,' ich komm' ihr Schatten!—
Sie rufen,—hörst du nicht? Es ist der Parze Schluß—
Bluttriefend—fürchterlich, steig' ich zum Erebus—
(Sinkt in düsterer Betäubung an Iphisens Brust.)"

The relation of Gotter's drama to this scene is fully discussed by Morsch: *Vorgeschichte von Goethe's Iphigenie, Vierteljahrschrift zur Litteraturgeschichte* IV, pp. 97–99. Also in the *Orestes* of Euripides we find a passage which bears a striking resemblance to the lines of Goethe. Electra, seeing the ravings of her brother, bursts into tears. Orestes then addresses her as follows (ll. 280 ff.):

'Sister, why weep'st thou, muffling o'er thine head?
Ashamed am I to make thee share my woes,
To afflict a maiden with my malady.
For mine affliction's sake break not, dear heart.'

1254. Orestes here believes that his sister is about to slay him and that thus by his death he will atone for his crime.

Scene 2.

Overcome by his torments of remorse and by the thought that his beloved sister is compelled to slay him, Orestes falls into a swoon. This swoon saves him from hopeless insanity. Gradually he recovers from his physical and mental exhaustion, his consciousness returns, and he believes that he is in Hades, that he has paid the penalty for matricide by being sacrificed by his sister. The discharge of the pangs of remorse in the previous scene, and the feeling that he finally atoned for his crime, bring to him a spirit of relief, peace, and reconciliation.

The feelings of sympathy, love, and forgiveness suggested or expressed by Iphigenia in the preceding scene, but rejected or distorted by the frenzied mind of Orestes, now assert their beneficent influence, vaguely at first, but gradually more strongly and distinctly, until finally they take full possession of him and rouse him to new and courageous effort. Schiller in his review of the drama (1789) expressed himself about this scene as follows: „Ein Selbstgespräch folgt, das einzige in seiner Art auf der tragischen Bühne. Es ist der letzte Wahnsinn Orests, mit welchem auch seine Furien von ihm Abschied nehmen. Hätte die neuere Bühne auch nur dieses einzige Bruchstück aufzuweisen, so könnte sie damit über die alte triumphieren. Hier hat das Genie eines Dichters ... durch den Fortschritt der sittlichen Kultur und den mildern Geist unsrer Zeiten unterstützt, die feinste, edelste Blüte moralischer Verfeinerung mit der schönsten Blüte der Dichtkunst zu vereinigen gewußt. ... Die wilden Dissonanzen der Leidenschaft, die uns bis jetzt im Charakter und in der Situation des Orest zuweilen widrig ergriffen haben, lösen sich hier mit einer unaussprechlichen Anmut und Delikatesse in die süßeste Harmonie auf, und der Leser glaubt mit Oresten aus der kühlenden Lethe zu trinken. Es ist ein Elysiumstück im eigentlichen wie im uneigentlichen Verstande."

1285. **Noch einen!** Orestes, thinking that he is in Hades, imagines that he has already drunk from 'Lethe's stream' and asks for one more cup of the waters, that the last remembrance of life's agony might be 'washed away from his heart'. —**reiche mir;** he addresses here some kindly spirit of the lower world, not further indicated by the poet.—**aus Lethes Fluten;** cf. note to l. 113 and *Æneid* VI, ll. 714–5: *Lethaei ad fluminis undam ... oblivia potant.*—The ancient artists represent the Fates (*Μοῖραι*) as offering to the departed spirits, after they had been ferried across by Charon, waters from the streams of Lethe.

1259. **kühlen Becher,** viz. to assuage his pangs of remorse which formerly seemed to him a consuming fire (ll. 1154–5) or seething streams (l. 1254).—In the *Orestes* of Euripides there is a passage which in thought and sentiment is strikingly similar to this one. When Orestes awakens from a deep

sleep into which he fell after the pursuit of the Furies he says, ll. 211 ff.:

'Dear spell of sleep, assuager of disease,
How sweet thou cam'st to me in sorest need!
O sovereign pain-oblivion, ah, how wise
A Goddess! by the woe-worn how invoked!
Whence came I hitherward? how found this place?
For I forget: past thoughts are blotted out.'

1260. **Krampf des Lebens,** 'convulsions or paroxysms of life'. He conceives here his past life as thrown into convulsive pains by his heavy misfortunes and thus utterly incapable of sound activity. Cf. ll. 571–2.

1264–5. **Gefällig laßt . . . sich . . . laben;** gefällig may have here the meaning of freundlich, gütig, and qualify laßt, or it may be taken as modifying sich laben and as meaning nach Gefallen, so wie es ihm gefällt.

1265. **den umgetriebnen Sohn;** umgetrieben is used here in contrast to Ruhe in the preceding line. It may have been suggested by the Homeric πλαγχθείς, often applied to Odysseus.

1266 ff. These lines seem to have been influenced by a passage in Wieland's *Alceste*, IV, 2. Admetus, overcome by the loss of his wife Alceste, imagines her entering the regions of Hades, and describes his vision as follows:

„O! nach wem, Geliebte,
Unglückliche, nach wem siehst du so zärtlich
Dich um? — Ich folge dir, ich komme! —
Weh mir! Schon hat das Ufer gegenüber
Sie aufgenommen! Liebreich drängen sich
Die Schatten um sie her; sie bieten ihr
Aus Lethens Flut gefüllte Schalen an."

Gelispel (l. 1266) and **Geräusch** (l. 1267) are caused by the moving tree-tops (cf. ll. 1–2) in the grove of the temple where Orestes now rests. As he believes himself in Hades, these rustling sounds of the trees seem to him like spirit-voices.

1268. **Sie,** viz. die Schatten (l. 1263).

1270. **sich freut;** Orestes' vision of the quiet and blissful existence of the shades does not agree with Iphigenia's

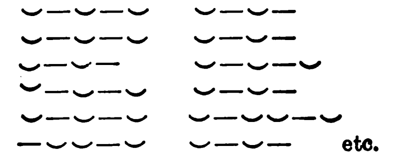
description of the lower world in ll. 111 ff., nor with the Homeric account of Hades in the *Odyssey* XI, ll. 488 ff. Cf. note to l. 112. But the vision of Orestes is not intended to present to us the ancient conception of Hades, but to suggest Orestes' present frame of mind. A spirit of peace has come upon him and so the life of the shades seems to him peaceful and happy.

1271 ff. **Sie gehen friedlich u. s. w.** Schiller in a letter to Goethe of May 5, 1802, writes about this passage as follows: „Die Erzählung von den Thyestischen Greueln und nachher der Monolog des Orests, wo er dieselben Figuren wieder in Elysium friedlich zusammen sieht, müssen als zwei sich aufeinander beziehende Stücke und als eine aufgelöste Dissonanz vorzüglich herausgehoben werden."

1272. **ähnlich,** = einander ähnlich, because they are all members of the same family.

1276. **Die Knaben,** viz. the sons of Thyestes who were seized and slain by Atreus and then eaten by their father. Cf. ll. 378 ff.—**um sie,** viz. about Atreus and Thyestes.

1281 ff. The irregular animated metre of the following lines expresses his joy and hope as he approaches and welcomes his ancestors. Each line has four accented syllables of an iambic-anapæstic movement with a cæsura after the second foot. The metre of the first six lines is as follows:



1285. **Doch leichter u. s. w.,** because the shades of the family, having drunk from the waters of Lethe, have forgotten the sorrows of the upper world; besides, his kindred, being now with him, will share whatever burden he may have to carry.

1286 ff. Gotter in his drama *Orest und Elektra* also presents a vision of Orestes in which he believes that he is in Hades and sees the shades of Ægisthus, Clytæmnestra and Aga-

memnon. But in Gotter's conception there is no reconciliation in Hades; the anger of Ægisthus and Clytæmnestra still continues there.

1289. **nur einmal,** viz. on the day when Agamemnon arrived in Mycenæ from Troy. At the outbreak of the Trojan war Orestes was but an infant. Cf. note to ll. 977 f.

1297 f. **Losung** = Losungswort, 'pass-word', 'signal'. The thought of this passage is more clearly expressed in the second prose version: „Heißt ihn willkommen! Auf Erden war's in unserm Hause ein Gruß zum Tod." The meaning is that the greeting of welcome has a quite different significance in Hades than it had upon earth. In Hades it is sincerely meant, whereas upon earth it was always a sign of contemplated murder.

1301. **zum Alten,** viz. Tantalus. Orestes, who now longs to see his whole race united and reconciled in Hades, painfully notices the absence of Tantalus.

1307 ff. Transl. 'The gods of supreme power have riveted with brazen chains cruel torments upon the hero's breast.' This description of the fate of Tantalus does not agree with the traditional accounts of his punishment. Cf. Intr. p. xii. It rather suggests the punishment of the Titan Typhœus, whom Zeus buried under Mount Ætna, or the sufferings of Prometheus, who for his transgressions against Zeus was chained to Mt. Caucasus, where his liver was daily consumed by an eagle.—It has seemed surprising to many commentators that in this vision of peace and reconciliation Tantalus should be the only one who has not been pardoned by the gods. Evers (*Goethe's Iphigenie auf Tauris*, p. 53) considers this passage the most difficult in the drama. The usual explanation of this seemingly discordant element in the vision of Orestes is that Tantalus was the only one of the race who had sinned against the gods themselves, whereas the crimes of the descendants were committed against men. His transgressions being therefore infinitely greater than those of his descendants could not be pardoned. Cf. Kuno Fischer: *Goethes Iphigenie*, pp. 29 ff. Such a distinction cannot be

defended on moral or religious grounds, for sins against men are also sins against gods. Moreover, this explanation would ill accord with the general belief underlying the drama that the gods are just and beneficent and willingly pardon truly penitent sinners. Frick's explanation (cf. *Wegweiser durch die klassischen Schuldramen* V, 1, p. 381) is more plausible, though not convincing. He thinks that since Tantalus had sinned against the gods, the gods alone can pardon him, but they have not done so because he has not yet resigned himself to their will, because he continues to bear a grudge against them.—All these interpretations* proceed from the assumption that in some way Orestes' vision of harmony and peace must be reconciled with the traditional sufferings of Tantalus. But the important question is not on what moral and religious grounds the punishment of Tantalus might be justified, but why Orestes in his particular situation should suddenly see the vision of the suffering Tantalus. It is a psychological question and requires a psychological explanation. It seems to the editor that the poet purposely introduced this discordant element to indicate the process of the gradual awakening of Orestes from his fanciful vision to the world of reality. Up to l. 1301 he has no sense of reality. The beautiful visions he sees in his dream suggest to us merely his changed mental attitude. With l. 1301 we note a slow return to consciousness. He expects to see also his revered ancestor Tantalus joined to the other members of his reconciled family, but when he is unable to find him, the old tradition of the fate of his great ancestor suddenly occurs to him, a tradition so deep-rooted in all the members of the race that even the pure Iphigenia recalls it in a critical moment of her life (cf. ll. 1718 ff.). The active fancy of Orestes then constructs the facts of this well-known tradition into such a vivid picture that he really believes that he sees the sufferings of his ancestor in Hades. Thus the recollection in his dream of the family tradition

* Evers gives a short sketch of all the attempted explanations, pp. 175 ff.

about Tantalus is the first slight bond between himself and reality. Its sharp contrast to the former vision of peace serves as the first stimulus to bring him back to consciousness.

Scene 3.

1310 ff. Orestes now recognizes Iphigenia and Pylades, who are standing before him, but as he still imagines himself in Hades, he believes that they have come to join him and the rest of the family, and hopes that his other sister, Electra, might soon follow them. Fancy and reality are here finely blended, which shows that he is recovering consciousness. Note that in this speech Orestes continues to use the metre of the latter part of the preceding scene. Cf. note to ll. 1281 ff.

1313. **Mit sanften Pfeilen**; according to Greek belief those who died a quick and gentle death were supposed to have been killed by the arrows of Apollo or Diana, men by those of Apollo and women by those of Diana. Cf. the Homeric *οἷς ἀγανοῖς βελέεσσιν* in the *Odyssey* III, l. 280 and XI, ll. 172–3.

1314. He pities Pylades because he fears that his friend, though eager to live, was obliged to share his fate. Cf. ll. 596 ff.

1315. The first **komm mit** seems to be addressed to Pylades, the second to his sister. This is an improvement upon the earlier versions, where he addressed both with **kommt mit**.

1317 ff. This passage shows distinctly the influence of Euripides, *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 1398–1402. When the sudden appearance of contrary winds prevented the escape of Iphigenia and Orestes from Tauris, the priestess offered the following prayer to Artemis:

ὦ Λητοῦς κόρη,
σῶσόν με τὴν σὴν ἱερίαν πρὸς Ἑλλάδα
ἐκ βαρβάρου γῆς καὶ κλοπαῖς σύγγνωθ' ἐμαῖς.
φιλεῖς δὲ καὶ σὺ σὸν κασίγνητον, θεά·
φιλεῖν δὲ κἀμὲ τοὺς ὁμαίμονας δοκει.

'Leto's Child, O Maid,
Save me, thy priestess! Bring me unto Greece
From alien land; forgive my theft of thee!
Thy brother, Goddess, dost thou also love:
O then believe that I too love my kin.'

1317. **Geschwister**, viz. Diana and Apollo, the former the patron goddess of the priestess, the latter the god who promised help to Orestes in Tauris.

1323–24. Goethe expresses here the astronomical fact unknown to the ancients, that the moon receives its light from the sun, in a new and beautiful mythological creation.

1329. **ihm durch mich u. s. w.**; she implies that she intends to prevent his sacrifice at the altar of Diana. Cf. note to 1218 ff.

1340. This line was added in the final version. **Parze**, the Latin *Parca*, which corresponds to the Greek *Μοῖρα*, Fate. Influenced by the Greek belief that Clotho, one of the three Fates, spins out at the birth of man the thread of his life, the poet develops here the conception that a kindly Fate is now spinning delicate threads upon which the safe return of all depends.

1341 ff. Iphigenia's touching prayer to the goddess in behalf of Orestes, her words that through his help she hopes to return to Greece (l. 1328), and the vigorous exhortation of Pylades to realize the situation, which is full of imminent perils for all of them, finally bring Orestes back to full consciousness. Cf. note to ll. 1310 ff. He awakes, physically and spiritually restored. He feels that the Furies have left him and looks forward with courage to a life of vigorous action. Cf. Intr. p. xc. There is some analogy between this scene and the vision of Egmont before his death (Act V, Gefängnis). Shortly after the reading of the death-warrant the imprisoned Egmont discovers that Ferdinand, Alba's son, in whom he suspected his bitterest foe, is really his most devoted friend. The sympathy of Ferdinand has the most soothing effect upon the hero. After Ferdinand leaves,

the wearied Egmont falls into a peaceful slumber and, like Orestes, sees in his dream a glorious vision in which he finds beautifully realized all that for which he strove in life. When he awakes, he feels new strength and courage, and goes to death like a hero in the firm conviction that his cause must in the end prevail.—The awakening of Orestes was sketched in 1787 in Rome by Goethe's friend, the artist Angelica Kauffmann. This sketch, which is now in the Goethe National-Museum in Weimar, has been reproduced in the *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, Vol. IX. Cf. also pp. 218 ff. of that volume. Orestes is represented as resting under a large tree of the sacred grove of the temple. Iphigenia stands on the left with her hand upon the shoulder of her brother; Pylades is on the right, firmly grasping the left hand of Orestes to rouse him from his vision. Goethe in his letter of March 13, 1787, of the *Italienische Reise* refers to this sketch of Angelica Kauffmann as follows: „Das, was die drei Personen hinter einander sprechen, hat sie in eine gleichzeitige Gruppe gebracht und jene Worte in Gebärden verwandelt. Man sieht auch hieran, wie zart sie fühlt und wie sie sich zuzueignen weiß, was in ihr Fach gehört. Und es ist wirklich die Achse des Stücks." This scene was also sketched by the artist Wilhelm Tischbein. Cf. *Goethe-Jahrbuch* IX, p. 221.

1343 ff. The underlying idea of this exalted prayer of Orestes is that just as nature is revived and strengthened by the purifying effect of a thunderstorm, so his nature has been refreshed and invigorated by the tempestuous outbursts of his soul. The faithfulness and grandeur of Goethe's description of a thunderstorm have been universally admired. Cf. similar descriptions in *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, letters of June 16 and Dec. 12.

1344. **Ihr**; we should expect this personal pronoun to follow directly the relative die (l. 1343). Its irregular position seems to be due to metrical reasons.

1345. **gnädig-ernst**, 'with severe graciousness', meaning that the gods 'graciously' grant the long-desired rain, but do

so 'with severity' by sending with it winds and thunder. Cf. note to l. 552.

1348. **grausendes Erwarten**, viz. the expectation of misfortune.

1353. **Iris**, goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods. She is conceived as dissipating the last gray mists of the clouds by drawing a rainbow between heaven and earth.

1355 ff. **mich auch**, viz. like nature which has been refreshed by the thunderstorm. Cf. here the words of Admetus in Wieland's *Alceste*, II, 1:

„Wo ist sie (Alceste), daß ich diese Freude
In ihren Busen schütte? Diese Wonne
Mit ihr empfinde? Dieses neue Leben
In ihren Armen doppelt wieder fühle?"

1356. **was ihr mir gönnt**, viz. release from the pursuit of the Furies, which will be followed by a renewed joy in life and a vigorous activity. Cf. l. 1364.

1358 ff. Cf. here a similar passage in the *Iphigénie en Tauride* of Guimond de la Touche. After the statue of the goddess has been captured, Orestes says:

'L'horreur me fuit; tout semble autour de moi rennaître;
Dans un monde nouvel je prends un nouvel être.'

See Intr. p. xxxvii.

1359. **Die Eumeniden**, a euphemistic name given to the propitiated Furies. For the origin of the name cf. Intr. p. xxiv. This name is here significantly used to indicate that the Furies have ceased to be goddesses of horror and torture for Orestes.

1361. **fernabdonnernd**, a new word-formation of Goethe. It may be taken as meaning either fernab donnernd, 'thundering at a distance', 'with a distant thundering noise'. It is so interpreted by Grimm. Or it may be taken in the sense of fern abdonnernd, abdonnern meaning the gradual ceasing of the thunder. The word would then mean: 'their thunder

gradually dying away in the distance'. The latter interpretation agrees better with the clanging of the brazen gates of the far-off Tartarus.

1362. **dampft,** here used in the transitive sense of *aushauchen, ausströmen lassen,* 'exhale'. The picture of the earth refreshed by the thunderstorm is continued.

1363. **auf ihren Flächen;** we should expect it to follow labet... ein, for it is to be taken with jagen of the next line. This is seen from the prose version of 1781, which reads: „und labet mich ein auf ihren Flächen nach Lebensfreude und großer Tat zu jagen."

1365 ff. It is to be noted that Acts II and III have been almost wholly devoted to the portrayal of the inner conflicts of Orestes and to his final release from the Furies. In the mean time the dangers arising from Thoas' order to sacrifice the two Greek captives have been well-nigh forgotten. When Schiller undertook in 1802 to revise the drama, the almost exclusively psychological interest in these two acts seemed to him a serious dramatic defect. On Jan. 22, 1802, he wrote to Goethe as follows: „Ferner gebe ich Ihnen zu bedenken, ob es nicht ratsam sein möchte, zur Belebung des dramatischen Interesse, sich des Thoas und seiner Taurier, die sich zwei ganze Akte durch nicht rühren, etwas früher zu erinnern und beide Aktionen, davon die eine jetzt zu lange ruht, in gleichem Feuer zu erhalten. Man hört zwar im 2ten und 3ten Akt von der Gefahr des Orest und Pylades, aber man s i e h t nichts davon, es ist nichts Sinnliches vorhanden, wodurch die drangvolle Situation zur Erscheinung käme. Nach meinem Gefühle müßte in den zwei Akten, die sich jetzt nur mit Iphigenien und dem Bruder beschäftigen, noch ein Motiv ad extra eingemischt werden, damit auch die äußere Handlung stetig bleibe und die nachherige Erscheinung des Arkas mehr vorbereitet würde. Denn so wie er jetzt kommt, hat man ihn fast ganz aus den Gedanken verloren." Schiller with his keen sense for strong dramatic organization would doubtless have united these two acts more clearly with the main action of the drama. Goethe, however, was not much concerned about the stage effect of his work. His chief interest lay in the faithful psychological representa-

tion of the influence of Iphigenia upon the conscience-stricken Orestes. Cf. Intr. p. lxxiv. And so in Acts I–III he purposely concentrated his attention upon Orestes and Iphigenia so as to make the healing of Orestes stand out in due prominence as the 'axis of the play'. After the words of Orestes himself have assured us of his release from the Furies, Pylades gives a new impetus to the dramatic action. He reminds Iphigenia and Orestes that danger is imminent, and tries to devise plans by which Iphigenia may evade the command of Thoas and help them in the capture of the statue and their return to Greece.—The warning of Pylades in this passage corresponds to the words of Pylades to Orestes in Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 902–908.

1366–7. The meaning of these lines is: Not till we shall have successfully carried out our plans of escape and gained the open sea, will we offer our joyful thanks to the gods in Olympus.

1368. **Rat**, has here the sense of **Beratung**, and **Schluß** of **Entschluß**. Cf. note to l. 161.

Act IV.

Now that Orestes is healed, the main theme of the drama, viz. the return of the Greeks to their native land, is resumed. Seemingly insuperable difficulties and dangers stand in the way of their escape from Tauris. Thoas has commanded the immediate execution of the strangers. How can Iphigenia evade this command and save her brother and Pylades? The instructions of the oracle must be obeyed, and all interpret this oracle to mean that Apollo demands that the statue of Diana be captured and brought to Greece, if Orestes is to be permanently released from the pursuit of the Furies. How can this be effected? It is preposterous to suppose that the king can ever be induced to surrender willingly the image upon which, he believes, the safety of his land depends. Time is precious, and Iphigenia and Orestes

are in no frame of mind to suggest plans. Here the practical and resourceful Pylades comes to their help and assumes a rôle worthy of his model Odysseus. He feels that only through strategy can they evade the command of Thoas, capture the sacred image and effect their escape. Accordingly he devises a cunning plan by which the king is to be duped and which, it must be assumed, he communicates to Iphigenia and Orestes between Acts III and IV. The plot is essentially the same as in the drama of Euripides, and requires for its execution the assistance of Iphigenia. (But in Euripides the plot is both formed and executed by Iphigenia.) In her eager desire to save her brother Iphigenia at first accedes to the plan of Pylades, but upon reflection her conscience begins to torment her. Thus far she has lived in and acted upon the faith that the gods were just and beneficent and demanded purity and truth of man. Her life and teachings among the Scythians were based upon that faith. For many years she has cherished the belief that only by keeping herself pure she might some day be able to purify her family in Mycenæ. And now the stress of circumstances seems to demand that she practice deception upon the king, who has been her friend and protector, and thus prove untrue to her faith and, like her ancestors, become involved in guilt. She is divided against herself. The safety of her brother and their return to Greece seem to require deception; the instincts of her heart and her interpretation of the will of the gods demand truth. How will she act in this greatest trial of her life? Her intense inner conflict and the great interests that are at stake give her the chief rôle in the last two acts of the drama.—Riemer, Goethe's secretary, reports that the fourth act was written on March 19, 1779, *sereno die quieta mente*, on the Schwalbenstein in the mountains of Thuringia.

SCENE 1.

Pylades and Orestes have gone to the seashore to make the preparations necessary for carrying off the statue of Diana to Greece. According to agreement Iphigenia is to

help them in their plans by deceiving the king. She reflects upon the rôle assigned to her, and her agitated frame of mind is indicated by the irregular metre of the first thirteen lines. The general movement of these lines is dactylic-trochaic. With l. 1382 the iambic pentameter is resumed.

1369 ff. These lines may have been influenced by the words of Parthenia in Wieland's *Alceste*, IV, 1. She speaks of the friendship between Hercules and Admetus as follows:

„O! der ist nicht vom Schicksal ganz verlassen
Dem in der Not ein Freund
Zum Trost erscheint."

1377. **der Stadt**, viz. der Vaterstadt.

1385. **leuchtend Aug'**, refers here to the clearness of his intellect, which shines forth from his 'luminous eye'. Pylades seems to Iphigenia to have both the courage of youth and the wisdom of old age; he has the virtues of an Achilles and a Nestor.—**Versammlung** = Ratsversammlung.

1386. **Denn seine Seel' ist stille**; this characterization applies much better to Iphigenia's usual frame of mind than to that of Pylades. Pylades is clear-headed, circumspect, resourceful, but he can hardly be said to possess calmness of soul. Cf. note to l. 307.

1387. **unerschöpftes** = unerschöpfliches.

1388. **den Umhergetriebnen**, viz. those who, like herself and Orestes, are driven about by agitation and care.

1389. **Aus ihren Tiefen**, viz. aus den Tiefen seiner stillen Seele.

1392. **eigen machen**, in prose zu eigen machen, 'realize'.

1398. **kluges Wort**; Iphigenia shrinks here from calling the rôle assigned to her by Pylades by the right name, but in l. 1405 she calls it Lüge.

1403. **zu hinterhalten**, 'to dissemble'; the intransitive use of this verb is unusual. The prose version of 1781 has: „denn ich habe nicht gelernt hinterhaltig zu sein."

1405. **O weh der Lüge!** Cf. *Iliad* IV, ll. 235 and IX, ll. 312 f.

1408 ff. It is a Homeric conception that the direction of

an arrow may be changed by the gods. Cf. *Iliad* IV, l. 129, and Schiller's *Maria Stuart*, ll. 1473 ff.

1409. **losgedruckter,** for losgedrückter.

1410. **versagend,** 'missing its aim'.

1413. **wieder,** to be taken with **greift,** l. 1412.

SCENE 2.

1422. Notice the contrast between **warten** and **harren.** The former conveys here the meaning of 'waiting with expectation', the latter of 'waiting patiently'.

1423. **folgte,** imperf. subj.: 'I should follow'.

1428. **vermelde,** for the usual **melde.** Cf. l. 1570.

1431–2. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 1171:

οἰκεῖον ἦλθον τὸν φόνον κεκτημένοι.

'Stained with the guilt of murdered kin they came.'

1434. **in dem innern Tempel,** 'in the interior of the temple'. Cf. *in medio templo.*

1435. **Das Übel,** viz. of the Furies. What Iphigenia here tells Arkas is the plan devised by Pylades for robbing the image and escaping from Tauris.

1437. **mit meinen Jungfraun;** in the drama of Euripides the chorus consists of Greek captive maidens who aid Iphigenia in the service of the temple.

1438. **mit frischer Welle;** fresh running water was regarded by the ancients as efficacious in the purification of a polluted object. Cf. here the following dialogue between Iphigenia and Thoas in Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, ll. 1191 ff.:

Ιφ. ἁγνοῖς καθαρμοῖς πρῶτά νιν νίψαι θέλω.
Θο. πηγαῖσιν ὑδάτων ἢ θαλασσίᾳ δρόσῳ;
Ιφ. θάλασσα κλύζει πάντα τἀνθρώπων κακά.

. . . .

. . . .

Θο. οὔκουν πρὸς αὐτὸν ναὸν ἐκπίπτει κλύδων;
Ιφ. ἐρημίας δεῖ· καὶ γὰρ ἄλλα δράσομεν.

. . . .

ἁγνιστέον μοι καὶ τὸ τῆς θεοῦ βρέτας,

Iph. 'With holy cleansings would I wash them first.
Th. In fountain-waters, or in sea-pray showers?
Iph. The sea doth wash away all ills of men.

. . . .
. . . .

Th. Full on the fane doth not the sea-surge break?
Iph. There needeth solitude; more is to do.

. . . .

The image must I purify withal.'

1443. **nicht eh', bis,** for **nicht bis,** or **nicht eher als.**

1447. A frequently quoted line.—**zum Schein,** viz. as a matter of form.

1448. **Erdringe;** erdringen = durch Dringen etwas erhalten. 'Do not obtain by urging', 'do not insist upon urging'.

1451. **Lager;** it is to be remembered that Thoas has just returned with his army from war. Cf. l. 58.

1453. **noch eine Botschaft,** a delicate suggestion that she accept the king's proposal of marriage. If he could bring such a message to the king, all the present complications and dangers would be removed.

1454. **löste,** imperf. subj.

1455. **des Treuen;** Arkas refers to himself. Cf. ll. 153 and 215.

1456. She refers to her revelations to Thoas of her family and her past, and of her hopes to return to Greece. Cf. Act I, Scene 3.

1458. **nun einmal,** colloquial, 'once for all', 'really'. Iphigenia means that it is not within man's power to change his natural feelings and inclinations.

1459. In prose we should have **für** before **unmöglich.** After this line the following significant two lines occur in the prose versions:

„Arkas. Um dein und unsertwillen wünsch' ich es.
Iphigenie. Dir sei für deine gute Meinung Dank."

1461. **alles . . . wagen,** viz. the life of the captives, her *own fate* and the happiness of the king and the Scythians.

1463. **menschlich**, viz. not by miraculous intervention, but in a natural way, 'by human means'. Cf. l. 494.

1464. She finds in her instinctive aversion to a union with Thoas a hint of the gods that they do not approve of such a marriage.

1468–9. These lines do not agree with the assertions of Thoas in ll. 520–21, where the king states that the people clamor for the restoration of human sacrifices. We may, however, assume that the humane and optimistic Arkas idealizes here the Scythians, or, what is more probable, that the king in his bitterness and disappointment misinterprets the spirit of his people. Cf. note to ll. 503 ff.

1472 ff. Through Iphigenia's influence the Scythians have begun to prize the blessings of hospitality.

1475. **was du vermagst**, viz. to continue your civilizing influence upon king and people. Arkas fears that a return to human sacrifices would undo her previous noble work in Tauris. Ll. 1475–1482 were added in the final revision.

1476. **endest** = vollendest.

1477–1482. The main thought of this famous and much-quoted passage is that a noble person of clear moral perceptions may be a source of the greatest helpfulness to a sound, primitive people that vaguely strives after truth. Arkas wishes to make Iphigenia realize the importance of her mission in Tauris which she is about to abandon.

1479. **trüb**, viz. of beclouded vision, lacking in spiritual insight. The word may be associated with Goethe's early use of dumpf, Dumpfheit, a dreamy, vague striving after clearness. Cf. *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen*, Vol. XCVI, pp. 1–42 (R. M. Meyer).

1480. **neues** = jugendliches.

1481–2. A vigorous primitive people following its instincts dimly divines the truth, but these divinations are often accompanied by fear because they are lacking in clearness of spiritual insight (hence banger Ahnung). Such a people will naturally feel keenly 'the heavy burdens of human existence'.

1489–90. Meaning: The fact that my words cause you pain is the best proof that you are convinced of their force and truth. Therefore, it is from your sense of pain that I expect the greatest help in my appeal to you.

1492. **Widerwillen,** viz. her aversion to a union with Thoas.

1493. **eine schöne Seele,** 'a harmonious soul'. Cf. Schiller's essay *Über Anmut und Würde, Werke* X, pp. 103 ff., where the idea of the schöne Seele is philosophically developed.

1494. **der Edle,** viz. Thoas. Cf. note to l. 33.

1497–8. A frequently quoted passage.

1500. **wiederholtest,** subj., 'if you but would recall'.

1502. **bis diesen Tag,** for the more usual bis auf diesen Tag.

Scene 3.

The unexpected joy over the discovery of her brother and her desire to save him and return with him to Mycenæ have for a while so absorbed the attention of Iphigenia that she readily accepted the plans of Pylades and lost sight of all other considerations. But the timely words of Arkas have aroused serious doubts in her soul. She now feels that she has also duties toward Thoas and the Scythian people, and realizes above all the ingratitude involved in the rôle of trickery and deception which Pylades has assigned to her.

1504–5. **das Herz im Busen . . . umgewendet;** this expression may have been suggested by the Homeric *ἐντρέπεται φίλον ἦτορ.*

1506 ff. Cf. here Iphigenia's words in ll. 1196 ff.

1510. **das Unmögliche,** viz. das was ich für unmöglich gehalten hätte, referring probably to her meeting of Orestes. Since Tauris was far distant from Greece and notoriously hostile to Greek strangers, she naturally considered it impossible that she would ever meet her brother there. Others, however, refer the word to her prospective rescue from Tauris through Orestes, which formerly seemed impossible to her.

1511 ff. The overwhelming flood of joy which came upon

her when she met her brother, and which excluded every other thought except that of their happy return to Greece, blinded her so that for a moment she thought that another miracle like that in Aulis would happen, i.e. she forgot that men must help themselves.

1517. das Herz = mein Herz.—einziger = alleiniger, ausschließlicher. She was for a while so absorbed in her brother that she was incapable of any other thought.

1524. Menschen, emphatic, not merely barbarians but human beings to whom she has moral obligations, whom she has led to a higher conception of life and who have treated her most kindly. In this conception of humanity as transcending race and nationality Goethe's Iphigenia differs radically from the heroine of Euripides. The Greeks restricted their moral code to their own people,—and so the Iphigenia of Euripides feels no scruples in deceiving 'barbarians'. Cf. note to l. 862 and Intr. pp. xcviii–xcix.

1525. Doppelt; firstly because the very idea of deceit is hateful to her, and secondly because in this case deceit would involve ingratitude toward the king and the Taurians. Cf. this passage with its earlier versions where the thought is more clearly expressed.

1527 ff. Cf. here the following words of Alceste (Act I, Sc. 1):

„Zwischen Angst und zwischen Hoffen
Schwankt mein Leben, wie im Rachen
Der empörten Flut ein Nachen
Ängstlich zwischen Klippen treibt."

1528–31. In the retirement of her priestly office Iphigenia has thus far never felt any doubts in regard to her duties, but now she is suddenly plunged into a great conflict between the duties toward her brother and her obligations toward Thoas and the Scythians.—Wieder eingeschifft u. s. w. Thinking of her return to Greece, she naturally views her present moral complications in the form of the dangers of a sea-voyage. The tempestuous waves of the

sea upon which she is about to embark are to her a symbol of the violent conflicts of her own soul. Notice the contrast between die Wellen schaukelnd and den festen Boden deiner Einsamkeit.

Scene 4.

A comparison of this scene with its earlier versions shows considerable and important changes by which the action, thought, and expression were much improved.

1536 ff. Pylades regards Orestes' recovery as complete because the Furies did not attack him again on the unconsecrated ground outside of the temple.

1537. den Sand, viz. des Ufers.

1541. Flamme, here 'halo', 'aureole'.

1542. lockig, denoting like the Homeric *οὖλος* great manly strength and beauty. Cf. *Odyssey* VI, l. 231.

1543. freies Herz, viz. free from the Furies.

1551 ff. According to the earlier versions of this passage the ship companions of Orestes and Pylades have not yet been found. Therefore Orestes remained alone on the seashore and lighted a large fire in the hope of attracting their attention and calling them back.

1558 f. Und selbst ein Wind u. s. w. According to the Homeric conception favorable winds are sent by the gods. Cf. *Iliad* I, l. 479, and *Odyssey* II, l. 421. Pylades therefore regards the sudden appearance of a favorable wind as a sign that the gods are propitious to their undertaking.

1559. gleich = sogleich.

1562. unsrer Wünsche Ziel, viz. the image of Diana.

1569. das kluge Wort, cf. note to l. 1398.

1571. teurer Mann, cf. ll. 1257 and 1619, and note to l. 844.

1572. Ein schweigender Verweis, because as soon as she saw him, she felt that she had not acted according to their agreement.

1580 f. Cf. l. 1444.

1590. gestehen, for the usual zugestehen, 'grant'.

1591. A line of six feet.

1594. **steh fest,** viz. insist upon the necessity of immediately purifying the polluted image of Diana by carrying it to the sea. Cf. note to l. 1438.

1601. **So schaff' uns Luft,** 'procure for us a breathing-spell', 'give us time'. By pretending that the strangers are guarded in the temple and by refusing to show them to Arkas, Iphigenia would compel him to go once more to the king, and thus time would be gained.

1603. **Dem rauh unwürd'gen Volk;** with these words Pylades tries to justify the robbery of the image of Diana. In contrast to Iphigenia, Pylades takes here the narrow national Greek attitude toward the Taurians, that their barbarism makes them unworthy of possessing the sacred image. Cf. ll. 734 ff. and note to l. 1524.

1605. **die Bedingung**, viz. the seizure of the sacred image. Cf. note to ll. 722 ff. He calls the fulfillment of this condition fromm from the national Greek point of view, because it will redound to the glory and benefit of the Greeks and injure the barbarians.

1606. **sein Versprechen,** viz. the deliverance of Orestes from the Furies. Cf. ll. 1536 ff.

1609. **Felseninsel,** seems to refer to the island of Delos, the smallest island of the Cyclades in the Ægean Sea. According to Greek legend it was originally a floating island, and was the birthplace of Apollo and Diana. It had a great sanctuary of Apollo and was one of the celebrated places of worship of that god. But if Felseninsel refers to the island of Delos, the statement here does not agree with ll. 722–3 and 1928 ff., according to which the image of Diana was to be brought to Delphi. Cf. note to ll. 722 ff. Some critics have tried to explain this inconsistency by assuming that Goethe simply confused the Phocian town of Delphi with the island Delos. Such confusion, they claim, might have arisen naturally enough in view of the fact that Delphi and Delos both contained famous sanctuaries of Apollo, and moreover, because Goethe several times used the form Delphos

(instead of Delphi), which might therefore be easily confounded with Delos. So in all the earlier versions of l. 723 we find nach Delphos. Also in his letter to Frau von Stein of Oct. 18, 1786, he writes of a plan „zur Iphigenie auf Delphos". —Other commentators find no inconsistency between this line and l. 723. They assert that Goethe actually intended Felseninsel to refer to the island of Delos, where, according to the plan of Pylades, they were to stop first and render thanks to Apollo. From Delos they would then proceed to Mycenæ (l. 1610), and finally bring the image from Mycenæ to Delphi. This interpretation is entirely possible.

1611 ff. The curse of the family has also affected the images of the household gods, which are here represented as having fallen down from their accustomed places. For Vatergötter cf. note to l. 942.

1613. **ihre Wohnungen**, viz. the niches upon the hearth where the household gods were usually placed.

1615 ff. This description of Pylades of the mission of Iphigenia in Mycenæ agrees so well with her own aspirations that she is naturally profoundly moved by it. Cf. ll. 1699 ff., 1968 ff., and the words of Orestes in ll. 2136 ff. See also Intr. p. lxxxvi.

1616. A line of six feet.

1622. **sich**, a repetition of sich in l. 1619 (wendet sich), on account of the length of the sentence and for emphasis.

1625. **still versinkt**, 'in silence droops' (Miss Swanwick). In solitude doubts and misgivings arise which disappear in the presence of a resolute friend.

1628. **des Liebenden**, here in the sense of des Freundes. The original meaning of Freund is, in fact, 'the loving one'.—**entwickelte**, preterite subj. = würde entwickeln.

1633 f. **überschwebt . . . die freie Stirn**; the intransitive schweben is here made transitive by being compounded with über. Goethe follows here the example of Klopstock, in whose poetry such compounds frequently occur.

1634. **Trauerzug**, 'expression of sadness'.

1638–9. Meaning: Fear gives rise to danger by making

an undertaking seem more difficult than it is. Hence Fear and Danger may be conceived as having formed an alliance for the deception of man. The prose versions state the thought more simply: „Nur in der Furcht ist die Gefahr."

1641. Cf. l. 2004, where precisely the same words occur.

1645. **gebeut,** for gebietet. Cf. note to l. 54. This older form is used here probably for metrical reasons. Cf. ll. 1681–1686.

1647. Supply entschuldigt die Not of the preceding line before dich. Pylades purposely includes the gods in his statement because according to the belief of the ancients the gods themselves had to acknowledge the laws of necessity (ἀνάγκη).

1649. A popular quotation. **Fordrung,** 'claim', viz. upon our conscience. He who makes too severe demands upon himself assumes that he has also the power to fulfill them, and hence possesses hidden moral pride.

1650. These characteristic words are wanting in the earlier versions. Iphigenia rejects the implication of Pylades that her severe demands upon herself spring from moral pride. Her conduct is not determined by rational considerations, but by her instinct (ich fühle nur). This keen and sound moral instinct is the chief source of her strength, and finally prevails over all obstacles and dangers.

1651. This line does not occur in the earlier versions. It seems best to take recht as an adverb. 'If you feel yourself rightly (viz. if you properly feel your true worth), you must honor yourself.' Pylades means to say: If you appreciate your real worth, if, instead of thinking always of others, you have also due regard for your own rights and welfare, you must respect yourself for doing what I suggest, for you will thereby save yourself and your brother. This interpretation agrees with the Greek standpoint of Pylades, who feels no scruples about practicing deceit upon Thoas, provided he can thereby attain his end. Cf. note to l. 1603.

1652. A familiar quotation. **nur,** to be taken with **ganz unbefleckt.**

1653. **So,** viz. ganz unbefleckt (l. 1652).—**im Tempel,** viz. in solitude, far removed from intercourse with men.

1654 ff. Cf. with this passage Schiller's *Piccolomini*, ll. 2447–58; also *Wallensteins Tod*, ll. 779–792.

1655. **du lernst es auch,** viz. when you come in contact with the world. Our severity of judgment is modified by our experience.—lernst is used here with the force of a future.—It is to be noted that Pylades changes his views according to circumstances. In ll. 713 ff. and 722 ff., when it was necessary to raise the hopes of the depressed Orestes, he took the standpoint of an idealist, but now, when the moral scruples of Iphigenia are to be overcome, he urges the practical considerations of a realist.

1656. **Geschlecht,** viz. Menschengeschlecht.

1658. **mit den andern,** viz. im Zusammenleben mit den andern.

1661–4. A much-quoted passage.

1663. Man rarely judges his past actions correctly because he is apt either to underestimate them, if he sees higher tasks before him, or overestimate them, if they seem to have been unusually successful. He cannot appreciate his present acts because he cannot see them in their right perspective.

1672. **dein,** genit. Cf. note to l. 810.

1673. **trägt** = mit sich bringt.

1674. This line is to be taken in an ethical sense. Iphigenia has thus far been unaccustomed to do anything in violation of her ideals.

1680. **ehrne,** cf. note to l. 86. **Not** = Notwendigkeit. Cf. *dira necessitas* of the Romans and *ἀνάγκη* of Homer.

1682 f. **dem Götter selbst u. s. w.** Cf. note to l. 1647.

1684. **Des ew'gen Schicksals unberatne Schwester.** The poet conceives here Necessity as the sister of Fate. Both are but different words for the same idea, viz. the sequence of things according to eternal laws. Necessity is called unberatne Schwester des Schicksals because, as the word implies, she has no choice and is therefore inaccessible to

advice, which presupposes the possibility of a change of will. Cf. here *Wallensteins Tod*, ll. 183 ff.

1686. **gebeut**, cf. note to l. 1645.—**Das andre weißt du**; he refers to the directions he gave her in ll. 1593 ff.

1688. **Der Rettung schönes Siegel**, viz. the image of Diana. Orestes has already been restored to health (cf. ll. 1536 ff.) and so only the capture of the image of Diana is needed for the fulfillment of the oracle. This capture would put, as it were, the final seal upon their safety.

Scene 5.

1691. **bang und bänger**, cf. note to l. 21.

1692. **die stille Hoffnung**, fully explained in ll. 1701–2.

1694 ff. Cf. here the similar passage in Gotter's *Orest und Elektra*, IV, 5. Orestes in a moment of despair exclaims:

„Entflohn ist mein Vertrauen
Auf Götter—hin mein Mut—Geschlecht des Tantalus,
Schwebt auch auf mir der Fluch den du verwirktest? Muß
Ich büßen, ohne Schuld? Kann ich ihm nicht entrinnen,
Dem Schicksal meines Stammes?"

1695. **dies Geschlecht**, viz. her own family.

1696. **Nimmt doch alles ab!** 'everything, indeed, abates with time'.

1701. **mit reiner Hand und reinem Herzen**; very significant words. Iphigenia firmly believes that the atonement and restoration of her family are conditioned by her own purity.

1706. **Vaterwelt**, a word coined by Goethe after the analogy of Heimatwelt, Mittwelt.

1707. **taube Not**; necessity is so called because it is deaf to all appeal, because it is inexorable. Cf. note to l. 1684.

1711. **mein Schicksal**, seems to refer to her life in Tauris, where, protected by the strong hand of Thoas, she could realize her high ideals.

1713. Supply O daß of the preceding line before der Titanen.

For the attitude of the Titans toward the Olympian gods cf. note to l. 328.

1716. **Mit Geierklauen;** the large frieze of the temple of Pergamum (excavated 1879–80) represents in high relief the victorious battle of the Olympians with the giants, the two chief groups centering about Zeus and Athena. Here some of the Titans are actually represented with vultures' claws instead of hands.—In this critical moment of her life, when the stress of circumstances seems to compel her to yield to the plans of Pylades, the suspicion occurs to her that the gods, whom she has thus far regarded as just and beneficent, may be unjust and cruel, that they may wish to force her to trickery and deceit, and that her long-cherished belief that her personal purity was necessary for the atonement of her family may be an idle phantom. This terrible doubt arouses in her the fear that she, like her ancestors, may also be seized with a spirit of hatred against the gods, and so she implores them to help her to preserve her former faith in their justice and goodness. Iphigenia passes here through a conflict between belief and unbelief. In a note to the *West-östlicher Divan* (Israel in der Wüste) Goethe says: „Das eigentliche, einzige und tiefste Thema der Welt- und Menschengeschichte, dem alle übrigen untergeordnet sind, bleibt der Konflikt des Unglaubens und des Glaubens."—Ll. 1712–17 are lacking in the earlier versions. Here we see how Goethe wished in the final revision to accentuate the spiritual conflicts of the drama.

1718 ff. With the doubt that has come upon her there slowly emerges from her memory an old song often sung in the family of Tantalus, a song which she had heard in her childhood and had well-nigh forgotten,—the song of the Parcæ. This song, called forth with almost psychological necessity, powerfully expresses the doubt and gloom that have come upon her soul.

1719. **Vergessen hatt' ich's** u. s. w. She forgot it in Tauris, where as priestess of Diana she developed a conception of the gods directly opposed to the spirit of the old song. *Cf. ll.* 523–27 and 1100 ff.

1720. **Parzen**, the Parcæ (Greek *Μοῖραι*), the dark, mysterious powers of Fate, daughters of Night. Their names were Clotho (spinning one), Lachesis (allotter), and Atropos (inevitable). They were very ancient divinities related to the race of Titans. Goethe conceives them here as disapproving of the cruel sway of the Olympians and as pitying the fate of Tantalus.—**grausend** = Grausen empfindend, von Grausen erfüllt. The Parcæ themselves shuddered as they sang of the punishment of Tantalus.

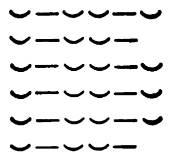
1721. **vom goldnen Stuhle**, viz. at the table of Jupiter. Cf. ll. 323 ff.

1726 ff. The song of the Parcæ is poetically the grandest and most impressive portion of the drama, suggesting in form and thought the antique choral odes. In its pessimistic view of the gods it closely resembles Goethe's *Prometheus* (cf. Intr. p. xliv) and *Das Lied des Harfners* in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. In the latter we find the following famous lines

> „Ihr (the gods) führt ins Leben uns hinein,
> Ihr laßt den Armen schuldig werden,
> Dann überlaßt ihr ihn der Pein;
> Denn alle Schuld rächt sich auf Erden."

The song is entirely original, although the theme may have been suggested to the poet by the following sentence of Hyginus (*Poet. Astron.* II, 15 [Sagitta]): *Illo tempore Parcæ feruntur cecinisse fata.'* In the version of 1779 it was written, like the rest of the drama, in prose, but its language was so rhythmic that Herder could change it into verse without altering a single word (cf. Goethe, *Werke*, XXXIX, p. 554). The final revision was worked out with great care, and shows in every respect a marked improvement upon all the earlier versions. The poem is divided into six stanzas of unequal length, the first five of which contain the song of the Parcæ, while the sixth describes the impression the song produces upon the imprisoned Tantalus. All six stanzas must, however, be conceived as sung by the nurse. The metrical

movement may in general be described as dactylic-trochaic with an unaccented syllable at the beginning of each line. The ending is generally feminine, masculine endings occurring only in four lines, viz. ll. 1727, 1731, 1760, 1766. The scheme of the first stanza is as follows:



It has been suggested that the metre of several of the folk-songs of Herder's collection may have influenced the metre of this song, viz. *Zaubergespräch Angantyrs und Hervors* (Herder, *Werke*, Vol. XXV, pp. 211 ff.), *Voluspa* (Ibid. pp. 460 ff.), and *Webegesang der Valkyriur* (Ibid. 478 ff.). The song was very successfully set to music by Johannes Brahms (Opus 89).—It treats of the arbitrariness, envy, injustice, and the relentless cruelty of the gods as illustrated in the case of Tantalus and his descendants. Thus the gloomy belief of Iphigenia's ancestors, which now threatens to encroach also upon her pure soul, is again presented to us with terrible impressiveness.

1726 ff. Cf. Schiller's ballad *Der Ring des Polykrates*, which also treats of the envy of the gods towards men.

1734. **Auf Klippen und Wolken**, viz. upon the many-peaked Olympus rising into the clouds.

1737 ff. A generalized statement of the experience of Tantalus in Olympus. Cf. ll. 317 ff.

1739. **Geschmäht und geschändet**; notice the alliteration, also in ll. 1743, 1747–8 (Berge zu Bergen), and 1756.

1740. **nächtliche Tiefen**, viz. of Tartarus.

1745. **Festen** = Festlichkeiten. The happy life of the gods stands here in harsh contrast to the tortures of the Titans in Tartarus.

1747 f. vom Berge zu Bergen; cf. note to l. 460.

1749 ff. Reference to the punishment of the Titans in Tartarus. Cf. note to l. 328. So when Typhœus (according to others Enceladus), a monster with a hundred fire-breathing dragons' heads, rebelled against the Olympians, Zeus conquered him with his thunderbolts and hurled him to Tartarus or, according to a later tradition, buried him beneath Mt. Ætna in Sicily (cf. *Æneid* III, ll. 578 ff.), whence he occasionally still breathes forth fire and flames against heaven.

1752–3. From the celestial heights of the gods Ætna seems an altar upon earth from which the breath of the stifled Titans ascends like a light haze of pleasant incense from sacrificial offerings. This whole picture suggests cruel indifference to the writhings of the buried Titans.

1754 ff. The gods punish and despise not only those who have sinned against them, but their hatred extends also to the descendants of the condemned ones—a clear reference to the curse of the house of Tantalus.—**die Herrscher**, a word which fittingly designates the tyrannical rule of the gods.

1759. **Still redenden Züge**, viz. features whose expression suggests a silent reproach of the tyranny of the gods.

1761 ff. The poet conceives here Tantalus as hearing the dread song of the Parcæ in Tartarus and sympathizing with his descendants.

1762 ff. **Es horcht der Verbannte . . . die Lieder**; in prose we should say auf die Lieder. Following the example of Klopstock Goethe uses sometimes horchen, denken, and other verbs with the direct object where we should expect it to be preceded by some preposition. So we have again in l. 1765 denkt Kinder und Enkel. Cf. note to l. 601.

1764. **die Lieder**, poetic plural instead of the singular and referring to the song of the Parcæ.

1766. **schüttelt das Haupt**, because he is amazed and sad at the relentless cruelty and injustice of the gods, who visit their hate even upon his descendants.

1801. **der**, demonstrative, referring to Schmeichelei.

1803. **altverjährtes Eigentum**, viz. a possession established by long custom, one which we no longer fear to lose, 'prescriptive property'. Cf. *Wallensteins Tod*, l. 195, also the earlier versions, where the thought is more fully expressed.

Scene 3.

1808. She implies that the goddess by requiring the lustration of the image before the sacrifice has given Thoas time to reconsider his command. Cf. ll. 1430 ff.

1811. **du**, is emphatic, 'you yourself'.

1813–14. The thought is here that one half of the curse of an evil deed falls upon him who commands it, the other half upon him who executes it.

1815. The king keeps himself personally undefiled as far as the execution of the deed is concerned.

1816 ff. Iphigenia compares the arbitrary rule of the king with that of Zeus. Just as the Homeric Zeus, the 'cloud-gatherer' (νεφεληγερέτα), the 'high-thundering' god (ὑψιβρεμέτης), plans death in his dark clouds, while his ministers, the lightnings (cf. the Homeric ἀστεροπητής, 'sender of lightning'), visit destruction upon the poor race of mortals, so Thoas unseen gives his cruel commands, while his willing agents execute them.—**sinnt** = sinnt aus.

1819–20. The mighty god, indifferent to the terrible destruction caused by him, calmly moves on through his heights amidst the storm. The spirit of these lines is similar to that of the Song of the Parcæ, especially of ll. 1747 ff. She still feels the influence of that song.

1821. Notice the contrast between **die heil'ge Lippe** and **ein wildes Lied**. The unusual spirit of Iphigenia's speech surprises Thoas, who has so often heard from the priestess an entirely different interpretation of the nature of the gods.—The word Lied may be here used to designate the solemn lofty tone of her speech.

1822. **Nicht Priesterin**, sc. bin ich in diesem Augenblick wo ich mit dir spreche, an answer to the taunt implied in die heil'ge Lippe

of the preceding line.—**nur Agamemnons Tochter**; notice the irony implied in **nur**. As a princess of the noblest house of Greece she feels that she has a right to resent the tyrannical commands of the king.

1824. **rasch**, here in the sense of **heftig, ungestüm**.

1827–8. A famous passage and a favorite thought of Schiller and Goethe. That person is most truly free whose moral will is in full accord with the commands of duty. A person of such a frame of mind Schiller calls **eine schöne Seele**. Cf. note to l. 1493. In violation of this principle Thoas requires not free but slavish obedience (l. 1829). As a despot he commands her to execute an order against which her conscience rebels.

1830. **weder dort**, viz. in my parental home.

1831. **Ein alt Gesetz**, cf. ll. 506–510. This answer is not valid because Thoas himself, under the influence of Iphigenia, caused this old law to be abolished.

1832–3. Cf. here the words of Arkas in ll. 1466 ff.

1834 ff. **ein älteres u. s. w.** The law of hospitality was regarded by the Greeks as one of the oldest and most sacred. Cf. *Odyssey* VI, ll. 207 f.:

πρὸς γὰρ Διός εἰσιν ἅπαντες
ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε.

'For all strangers and needy ones belong to Zeus.'

Zeus was accordingly called Ζεὺς Ξένιος, 'Zeus, the god of strangers'. Cf. also *Antigone*, ll. 450 ff.

1837. Verse of four feet. The brevity of this sentence is emphatic. Notice that Thoas cannot contradict Iphigenia's appeal to the ancient law of hospitality.

1840. Cf. Soph. *Electra*, ll. 219–20:

τὰ δὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς
οὐκ ἐριστὰ πλάθειν.

'But such strife should not be pushed to a conflict with the strong.' Jebb's Transl.

1841. **immer**, has here the sense of **immerhin**, 'nevertheless'. The prose versions have **doch**.

1845. **Wie mehr,** for wie viel mehr or um wie viel mehr.—**denn,** 'then' or 'therefore'. She contrasts ein verschloßnes Herz (l. 1844) with her own heart, which is open and sympathetic.

1850. 'A dizzy horror overwhelmed my soul.' (Miss Swanwick's Transl.)—**wirbelnd,** here in the sense of schwindelnd.

1854. **weißt es,** viz. my past history.—**kennst mich,** viz. my character and principles.—**und,** for und doch.

1859. **Stünd',** older form of the preterite subj. for the now more common stände.

1861. **hat;** we should expect hätte. The indicative is used here for emphasis, because Iphigenia knows that Orestes is actually in Tauris, and because she has full faith in his courage.

1862. **Die Rechte seines Busens,** viz. the rights of freedom, of self-determination, as opposed to the constraints of barbarous custom.

1863–4. **es ziemt u. s. w.** A very popular quotation.—**der Frauen,** here sing., as is seen from the earlier versions. Cf. note to l. 24.

1866. Cf. *Iliad* VII, l. 102.

1867. **hält ... gering,** cf. note to l. 1459.

1868–9. **Auch ohne Hilfe u. s. w.** The word-arrangement is here unusual. We should expect: Auch hat die Natur den Schwachen nicht ohne Hilfe gelassen. Some commentators, however, take auch with den Schwachen. The weak person is not to be despised, for nature has provided *him too* with weapons of defense.

1870. **Künste,** here in the sense of 'devices', 'artifices', such as are mentioned in the next line.

1871. Notice that Iphigenia really hints here at the various devices which at the suggestion of Pylades she was to use against the king. Cf. ll. 1595 ff.

1872. **der Gewaltige,** here in the sense of der Gewaltsame, der Gewalttätige, 'the despot'. Cf. note to l. 336.—**sie,** viz. die List (l. 1870).

1874. The positive statement of the king that he suspects her of trickery (l. 1873) stings her. She does not yet know how she can save herself and her brother, but she instinctively feels that she cannot practice deception. Thus this line marks the turning-point of her inner struggles.

1875. Thoas implies that since Iphigenia herself hinted that she might use cunning against him (l. 1870), she cannot lay claims to purity of soul (l. 1874).

1877. **Ein bös Geschick**, viz. the seeming necessity of practicing deceit upon the king. The earlier versions have here ein bös Geschwür.—**will**, 'is about to'.

1880. **Die schöne Bitte u. s. w.** According to ancient custom suppliants were wont to carry branches of olive or laurel wreathed in wool, and place them upon the altar of the gods. Cf. *Œdipus Tyrannus*, l. 3. Here the request itself is conceived as a branch of peace in contrast to **Schwert und Waffe** in l. 1882.

1883. **mein Innres**, viz. the purity of my soul.

1884–5. Having been miraculously saved by Diana in Aulis, she naturally thinks now of invoking the help of the goddess,—but before doing so she asks herself whether her own moral will is not equal to the present danger. The second question suggests the manner in which her inner conflict will be solved.

1889. Notice the irregular metre of this line, viz. the anapæst in the third foot. It is not due to carelessness, but is purposely introduced to indicate the hesitation and mental perplexity of Iphigenia. Her first impulse is to tell the truth, but she checks herself and modifies her statement when she thinks of the danger to which her disclosure might expose her brother and Pylades. For Goethe's deviations from the regular metre cf. Fr. Vischer in the *Goethe-Jahrbuch* IV, pp. 13 ff.

1891 ff. Thoas utterly misunderstands Iphigenia. He has no idea of her inner conflicts, and ascribes her confusion and excitement to her selfish desire to return to Greece. Aroused *by his* misinterpretation of her real motives and feeling the

unworthiness of deceit, she resolves to act in accordance with her conscience and stake everything upon truth. Her confession is preceded by a series of reflections which she addresses more to herself than to the king and which serve to strengthen her in her resolution.

1893. **Unmögliches,** in the sense of unmöglich Scheinendes. Cf. note to l. 1510.

1895–8. A frequently quoted passage.

1896. **Dem immer wiederholenden Erzähler,** viz. the rhapsodist who in ancient times wandered from city to city, reciting his heroic stories or ballads. Even such a rhapsodist, who might be expected to have become indifferent to the stories he has so often related, feels himself powerfully stirred whenever he comes to the passages of extraordinary courage and valor.

1897. **als,** 'except'.

1898 ff. Reference to the adventure of Odysseus and Diomede, related in the *Iliad* X, ll. 503 ff. According to this story Odysseus and Diomede penetrated at night into the camp of the Thracian king Rhesus, killed him and stole his famous white steeds. This reference is really an anachronism, as Iphigenia cannot be expected to know the various adventures of the Trojan war.

1902. Transl.: 'finally hard pressed by those roused from their slumber', viz. by the enemy.

1903. **kehrt,** for zurückkehrt or wiederkehrt. Cf. note to l. 54.

1904 ff. Allusion to the heroic deeds of Theseus, who, proceeding from Trœzen to Athens, preferred the dangerous land journey to a safe passage by sea, and slew on his way several dangerous robbers and monsters who infested the country.

1909. **ihres angebornen Rechts,** viz. her gentleness, her right to conquer by spiritual weapons as opposed to man's physical force.

1912 f. **Auf und ab** u. s. w. She vacillates between confessing and concealing the truth.

1916. **Allein euch leg' ich's auf die Knie!** 'I leave it to your

decision'.—**euch** refers to the gods. This sentence is an imitation of *Iliad* XVII, l. 514:

ἀλλ' ἤτοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται.

'Yet verily these issues lie in the lap (at the disposal) of the gods.' (Lang's Transl.)

1919. Cf. here the words of Orestes to Iphigenia, ll. 1080–81.

1928 ff. Notice that Iphigenia's interpretation of the oracle of Apollo is as erroneous as that of Pylades. Cf. notes to ll. 610 ff. and 722 ff.

1934. **die überbliebnen,** poetic for **übriggebliebnen.** In this moment of intense agitation, when her whole mind is centered upon Orestes, she naturally forgets to mention her sister Electra, who still lives in Mycenæ. Cf. ll. 981–2.

1936. **wenn du darfst,** 'if you can', viz. if your conscience permits you to do so.

1936 ff. Cf. the bitter irony of these lines with Thoas' words in ll. 499–501. The rejected and disappointed suitor still believes that the proud Greek princess despises him because he is a barbarian.

1938 f. **die Atreus . . . nicht vernahm,** reference to the monstrous deed of Atreus related by Iphigenia herself in ll. 375 ff.

1939 ff. For Iphigenia's broad humanity, which distinguishes her from the heroine of Euripides, cf. note to l. 1524 and Intr. pp. xcviii–xcix. The spirit of humanity of this drama pervades the writings of the best thinkers and poets of the 18th century. Cf. Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* and *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*, Schiller's *Don Karlos*, *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* and *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, Herder's *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, and above all Goethe's *Faust* Pt. II, Act V.

1941. **Des Lebens Quelle,** viz. the sound natural instincts undefiled by the corruption of the world. This line contains a suggestion of the Rousseauic doctrine of the original goodness and purity of man.

1953 ff. Iphigenia's heroic confession has made such a deep

impression upon Thoas that his doubts in regard to *her* motives are dispelled, but his suspicious nature now turns against the Greeks, who, he believes, have artfully deceived her.—**künstlich dichtend**, 'by cunning invention'.—**Der lang' Verschloßnen**, 'one who has been long secluded from the world', and therefore who is inexperienced and might be easily deceived.—**ihre Wünsche**, 'her wishes'. Cf. Eurip. *Iph. Taur.*, l. 1181.

1957. Iphigenia admits that in her inexperience 'she could have been deceived' by other men, but not by Orestes and Pylades.

1958. Cf. ll. 768 and 1080–81.

1965. **seiner Frauen**, here sing. Cf. note to l. 24 and l. 966.

1968–9. Note that Iphigenia repeats here almost literally her words in ll. 1701–2. Cf. note to l. 1701.

1970 ff. Cf. ll. 293–4.

1972. **lassen**, for entlassen. Cf. note to l. 54.

1983 ff. **wie das heil'ge Licht der stillen Opferflamme**; the pure and gently burning flame of the sacrifice signified that the gods were propitious.—**umkränzt**, refers probably to Gnade. 'Let (thy) mercy, encircled by (my) hymns of praise and gratitude and joy, shine upon me like the holy light of the gently burning sacrifice.' Some commentators, however, refer umkränzt to Opferflamme. In that case the conception would be that the gently burning sacrificial flame calls forth in the pious worshippers hymns of praise and gratitude and joy.

1986. Cf. ll. 121 and 511 ff. Cf. here also Goethe's letter to Frau v. Stein of Jan. (?) 1776 (letter No. 5 in Schöll's Ed.), in which he also calls his friend **Besänftigerin**; also letter of Aug. 8, 1776. See Intr. p. liii.

1989. A frequently quoted line.

1990. **Sehr viel**, sc. Überlegung.—**folgt**, here in the sense of folgt manchmal. Thoas is cautious and accustomed to weigh all the possible consequences of his actions.

1991. A popular quotation.

Scene 4.

Iphigenia's confession came just in time to avert the greatest danger from her brother and her countrymen, for the Greeks have been discovered by the Scythians, a struggle between them has begun, and the Greeks are in danger of being overpowered. Orestes has forced his way to the temple to carry off his sister and the sacred image to the ship.

1993 f. Haltet sie zurück, viz. the Scythians.

1998–9. In the presence of rulers the use of weapons is forbidden. Cf. Antonio's words to Duke Alphons:

„Vor dir verbarg er kaum das nackte Schwert."

Tasso, l. 1461.

2009. It is significant that Orestes does not by word or gesture reproach Iphigenia for her conduct. Falsehood is as foreign to him as to his sister.

2011. horche, here in the sense of gehorche.

Scene 5.

The Scythians are victorious. A word from Thoas and the Greek ship would be set on fire. But the king, under the influence of Iphigenia's confession, commands hostilities to cease in order to investigate the affair calmly. It is clear that but for the moral heroism of Iphigenia, the Greeks would have been inevitably destroyed.

2016. Haupt, in the sense of person. Cf. note to l. 268. Pylades surmises that it is the king from the dress and bearing of Thoas and the respectful manner of Arkas toward his master.

2022. Stillstand, for Waffenstillstand.

SCENE 6.

2035. **Dieser**, 'of this woman', of Iphigenia.—**Hier ist das Schwert u. s. w.** The idea that only the true son can wield the weapon of his father occurs frequently in poetry. Orestes means that he has no other proof of his identity than his father's sword, with which he can attest his birth in a duel with any warrior in the king's army.—The Greek tragic poets do not mention the sword of Agamemnon, but Goethe may have derived this *motif* from the dramas of Voltaire and Gotter, where it is often referred to. According to them the sword has been placed upon the grave of Agamemnon and is shown to Clytæmnestra. So in Voltaire's *Oreste*, *Œuvres*, Vol. V, p. 126, and in Gotter's *Orest und Elektra*, III, 4:

„Der Ring—du kennest ihn vielleicht—und diesen Stahl,
Den Agamemnon trug, als er dir noch befahl."

In Voltaire's *Mérope* Orestes is recognized through the armor of his father.

2041 ff. Combats between champions occur in Homeric times, though they were not as common as is here claimed by Orestes. So in the third book of the *Iliad* a contest between Menelaus and Alexandros (Paris) is described, and in the seventh one between Ajax and Hector.

2046 ff. The stranger Orestes offers himself here as the champion of all strangers, in order to establish the rights of hospitality in Scythia. He is striving here for the same ideals which his sister has sought to introduce into Scythia, viz. the abolition of human sacrifices and the recognition of the principles of humanity. Ll. 2050–57 were added in the final version.

2048–9. A frequently quoted passage.

2058 ff. Thoas' readiness to accept the challenge of Orestes shows that he believes that Orestes is the genuine son of Agamemnon. The manly straightforward bearing of Orestes is more convincing to the king than his appeal to the sword of Agamemnon.

2061 f. **doch ich stehe selbst ... dem Feinde,** 'I myself will ... take a stand against (or encounter) the enemy'.

2068. **Er falle gleich; gleich** is here concessive. The sentence is equivalent to wenn er auch fällt, wenngleich er fällt, or wenn er gleich fällt.

2072. **durchgeweinten,** for the more usual durchweinten, which occurs in the earlier versions, 'spent or passed in weeping'. The form durchgeweinten is used here probably for the sake of metre.—**Tag- und Nächten,** for Tagen und Nächten, which is the reading of the earlier versions. When two words are closely united forming one idea, Goethe and other poets of the 18th century occasionally give the inflectional ending only to the second word. Cf. Hildebrand's article in the *Archiv für Litteraturgeschichte*, Vol. VIII, pp. 114–115.

2073. **eine stille Seele,** designates here the mental condition of a person in bereavement who withdraws from the world and lives in solitude. This is a great improvement upon the earlier versions, which have „eine große Seele".

2074 f. **vergebens sich zurückzurufen bangt; sich** may be taken here as a dat. with zurückzurufen, and bangt in the sense of zagt, sich ängstigt. The meaning would then be: Die Seele ängstigt sich davor, den Freund vergebens (zu) sich zurückzurufen. It is, however, also possible to take sich as a reflexive with bangt, bangt sich = sehnt sich, verlangt. In the latter case the sense would be: Die Seele sehnt sich vergebens darnach, den Freund zurückzurufen.

2076 ff. This passage does not agree with Act II, Scene 2, and Act III, Scene 1, where her meetings with Pylades and Orestes are represented. In those scenes we do not find any careful inquiries of Iphigenia as to the identity of Pylades and Orestes. Nor is it possible to assume that Iphigenia may have made such inquiries between Acts III and IV, for the manner in which Orestes revealed himself to Iphigenia in the third act convinced her that he was her brother.

2082 f. **das Mal wie von drei Sternen;** this seems to be an invention of Goethe, although the idea may have been suggested to him by Aristotle's *Poetics*, chapter 16. There

Aristotle discusses the various external means by which a recognition may be brought about, and mentions among other devices the birthmark of 'stars' which occurs in the drama *Thyestes* of the poet Karkinos.

2087. **diese Schramme;** this second sign of recognition was suggested to Goethe by the *Electra* of Euripides, ll. 573 ff., where an old man recognizes Orestes by a scar upon his brow received from a fall when he and Electra were chasing after a fawn in their father's house. Goethe changes here the cause of the scar in order to suggest the impetuous character of Electra. Cf. ll. 1030 ff., and *Odyssey* XIX, ll. 386 ff.

2092. This line was added in the final version.

2095. In all the earlier versions a new scene, Scene 7, begins with this line, this new scene being occasioned by the return of Pylades and Arkas. (The stage direction at the beginning of this scene reads: Pylades kommt zurück; bald nach ihm Arkas.) But as these characters play no rôle in the final scene, their reappearance is entirely unnecessary, and therefore the former division of the scene was abandoned in the last version of the drama.

2095. **hübe,** conditional subjunctive for the now more usual höbe.

2104. **Dem goldnen Felle;** the earlier versions have: dem goldnen Vließe, viz. the Golden Fleece carried off from Colchis by Jason with the help of Medea.—**Pferden,** probably refers to the famous steeds of the Trojan king Laomedon, which he promised to Hercules for destroying a monster. When Laomedon refused to fulfill his promise, Hercules proceeded against Troy, stormed the city and slew Laomedon. Cf. *Iliad* V, ll. 638 ff.—**schönen Töchtern,** may refer to the abduction of Europa, Medea, Ariadne, Helen, etc.

2105. **sie,** viz. the Greeks. Since der Grieche in l. 2102 is used as a collective noun, the personal pronoun referring to it may be in the plural.

2108. **kennen,** seems to be used here in the sense of erkennen, 'recognize', as the real meaning of the oracle just occurs to him. By making Orestes discover the true

meaning of the oracle the poet indicates his superior mental clearness after his release from the Furies.

2113 ff. The words of the oracle were vaguely alluded to in ll. 563 ff., 611 ff., 722 ff., and 1928 ff. The poet has purposely postponed the exact statement of the oracle until the inner conflicts of Orestes and Iphigenia have been successfully overcome. Cf. here the words of the oracle in the drama of Euripides, ll. 82 ff.:

> *ἐλθὼν δέ σ' ἠρώτησα πῶς τροχηλάτου*
> *μανίας ἂν ἔλθοιμ' εἰς τέλος πόνων τ' ἐμῶν.*
> *σὺ δ' εἶπας ἐλθεῖν Ταυρικῆς μ' ὅρους χθονός,*
> *ἔνθ' Ἄρτεμίς σοι σύγγονος βωμοὺς ἔχει,*
> *λαβεῖν τ' ἄγαλμα θεᾶς, ὅ φασιν ἐνθάδε*
> *εἰς τούσδε ναοὺς οὐρανοῦ πεσεῖν ἄπο·*
> *λαβόντα δ' ἢ τέχναισιν ἢ τύχῃ τινί,*
> *κίνδυνον ἐκπλήσαντ', Ἀθηναίων χθονὶ*
> *δοῦναι· τὸ δ' ἐνθένδ' οὐδὲν ἐρρήθη πέρα·*

> 'To thee I came and asked how I might win
> My whirling madness' goal, my troubles' end,
> Wherein I travailed, roving Hellas through.
> Thou bad'st me go unto the Taurian coasts
> Where Artemis thy sister hath her altars,
> And take the Goddess' image, which, men say,
> Here fell into this temple out of heaven,
> And, winning it by craft or happy chance,
> All danger braved, to the Athenians' land
> To give it—nought beyond was bidden me.'

2117. **gedachte,** here in the sense of **meinte, im Sinn hatte.** In the earlier versions we have: „**und er verlangte dich**".—**Die strengen Bande,** refers to her office as priestess of Diana in Tauris. Cf. l. 34. The earlier versions read: „**Diana löst nunmehr die alten Bande.**"

2119. **Du Heilige;** cf. note to l. 65 and his letter from Bologna of Oct. 19, 1786 (*Italienische Reise*), quoted in Intr. p. xliii.

2120 ff. Cf. introductory note to Act III, Scene 2.

2126 f. Orestes pursued by the Furies regarded the gods as unjust and revengeful (cf. ll. 707 ff.), now their purposes seem to him 'glorious and beautiful'.

2127. **Rat**, cf. note to l. 279.

2127 ff. **Gleich einem heil'gen Bilde u. s. w.**, refers to the Palladium of Troy. When King Ilus founded the city of Ilium (Troy), he begged Zeus to show him a sign of his favor. The next morning he found before his tent the famous Palladium, viz. an image of Pallas Athena carved in wood. On its possession the fortune and welfare of the city depended, so that it had to be carried off by Odysseus and Diomede before Troy could be captured by the Greeks. Cf. *Æneid* II, ll. 164 ff.

2136 ff. Cf. ll. 1610 ff. and 1699–1702.

2139. **Krone**, an anachronism, for with the ancient Greeks the sceptre and not the crown was the symbol of royal authority. Cf. *Iliad* II, ll. 101 ff.

2141. **des nähern Rechtes**, refers to his claims upon Iphigenia as her brother, which are greater than those of Thoas, her benefactor. In the earlier versions Orestes also begs Thoas to forgive them their plans of deceit: „Vergib uns unsern Anschlag, unsre Künste."

2142–45. These four much-quoted lines tersely express the chief moral idea of the second part of the drama.

2146. **Denk' an dein Wort**; cf. note to l. 294.

2148 ff. **Sieh uns an!** Thoas has turned away from Orestes and Iphigenia, showing that he has not yet overcome his anger and disappointment. He is willing to let them go, but his whole manner shows that he feels the ingratitude of Iphigenia. To dispel this silent reproach of the king, Iphigenia expresses for the first time with a full heart the profound debt of gratitude she owes to Thoas and his people for their protection and loyalty during her long stay in Tauris. She now realizes more than ever what strong ties bind her to the king and the Scythians, and finds it really difficult to part with them. She therefore touchingly appeals to Thoas to establish rights of hospitality between

the Taurians and the Greeks. Even in distant Mycenæ she wishes to think back of her life in Tauris with gratitude and affection.

2159. **Den Ton der Stimme,** viz. the Scythian speech, which was generally repulsive to the Greeks.

2163. **selbst,** is emphatic. Iphigenia herself, the Greek princess, wishes to render such services to the Scythian strangers as were generally performed in Homeric times by handmaids. The manner of entertaining strangers as described in this passage is Homeric. Cf. *Odyssey* I, ll. 130 ff. and XIX, ll. 96 ff.—The establishment of the rights of hospitality between the Greeks and the Scythians marks the realization of the humane ideals for which Iphigenia has been striving ever since she arrived in Tauris.

2166. **geben,** optative subjunctive.

2168. **O wende dich zu uns!** Cf. l. 2148 and note.

2169. **holdes** = huldreiches, freundliches.

2174. **Lebt wohl!** addressed to both Iphigenia and Orestes. The king, deeply moved by the tender appeal of Iphigenia, lets them go in a spirit of kindness and sad resignation. He knows what Iphigenia meant to him, and in allowing her to depart he wins a great moral victory over himself. His laconic farewell is in entire accordance with his character. Schiller in his essay *Über die tragische Kunst* remarks about this ending: „Es ist eine vorzügliche Schönheit in der deutschen Iphigenia daß der taurische König, der einzige der den Wünschen Orests und seiner Schwester im Wege steht, nie unsre Achtung verliert und uns zuletzt noch Liebe abnötigt."

APPENDIX.

IPHIGENIE IN DELPHI.

Goethe intended to write a continuation of *Iphigenie a.* *Tauris* which was to bear the title of *Iphigenie auf Delph* (subsequently changed into *Iphigenie in Delphi*). The pl. was probably conceived in Weimar, and Frau v. Stein seen to have been acquainted with it. He carried it in his mi when he was on his way to Italy, and on Oct. 18, 1786, he wrote about it in his diary in Bologna as follows: „Heute früh hatte ich das Glück, von Cento herüberfahrend, zwischen Schlaf und Wachen den Plan zur Iphigenie auf Delphos rein zu finden. Es gibt einen fünften Akt und eine Wiedererkennung, dergleichen nicht viel sollen aufzuweisen sein. Ich habe selbst darüber geweint wie ein Kind, und an der Behandlung soll man, hoffe ich, das Tramontane erkennen." And in the *Italienische Reise* of Oct. 19, 1786, he sketches the action of this proposed drama as follows:

„Elektra, in gewisser Hoffnung, daß Orest das Bild der taurischen Diana nach Delphi bringen werde, erscheint in dem Tempel des Apoll und widmet die grausame Axt, die so viel Unheil in Pelops' Hause angerichtet, als schließliches Sühnopfer dem Gotte. Zu ihr tritt leider einer der Griechen und erzählt, wie er Orest und Pylades nach Tauris begleitet, die beiden Freunde zum Tode führen sehen und sich glücklich gerettet. Die leidenschaftliche Elektra kennt sich selbst nicht und weiß nicht, ob sie gegen Götter oder Menschen ihre Wut richten soll. Indessen sind Iphigenie, Orest und Pylades gleichfalls zu Delphi angekommen. Iphigeniens heilige Ruhe kontrastiert gar merkwürdig mit Elektrens irdischer Leidenschaft, als die beiden Gestalten, wechselseitig unerkannt, zusammentreffen. Der entflohene Grieche erblickt Iphigenien, erkennt die Priesterin,

welche die Freunde geopfert, und entdeckt es Elektren. Diese ist im Begriff, mit demselbigen Beil, welches sie dem Altar wieder entreißt, Iphigenien zu ermorden, als eine glückliche Wendung dieses letzte schreckliche Übel von den Geschwistern abwendet. Wenn diese Scene gelingt, so ist nicht leicht etwas Größeres und Rührenderes auf dem Theater gesehen worden."

After the *Iphigenie auf Tauris* was finished, the question arose in his mind whether it would not be better to work on the *Iphigenie in Delphi* rather than undertake the revision of *Tasso* (cf. *Italienische Reise* of Feb. 16, 1787), but for reasons unknown to us the plan was later abandoned. For a full discussion of the subject cf. Scherer: *Goethes Iphigenie in Delphi* in his *Aufsätze über Goethe*, pp. 161–175.

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